



ANTIPODES;

OR,

THE NEW EXISTENCE.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CHAPTER I.

It was on the first of June in some year since 1800, that I finally quitted Oxford in company with an associate, who had been the bane of my life ever since I had the misfortune to make his acquaintance, about the time of my matriculation. Never shall I, or can I, forget the brilliancy of that morning. We started, to the best of my recollection, a little before three in the morning; at any rate the sun had not yet risen in full splendour above

the horizon, but his crepusculine splendour suffused the eastern heavens with such a flood of celestial brilliancy, beauty and magnificence, as I either never saw, or never noticed before, nor have I since. I said to my intimate friend and mortal foe,

Ecce! aurora venit profundens omnia luce.

Yes, it was a glorious morning: the stars sang in harmony, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

But all the glory was in the heavens. Not a single ray of literary glory fell on my head, as I left, for the last time, that seat of sempiternal infamy or honour, never to be revisited. I had four years before visited it for the first time, as one of its candidates for glory, with a heart as full of that hope which comes to all, as Milton describes a certain place to be devoid of it. Such had been my obstinate perseverance and reputed talents prior to my removal to the University, that the first honours were thought to be as certainly mine, as if I had already possessed some undoubted title to them

by purchase or inheritance. But “how art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning !”

As the coach hurried us away, very mercifully to me, from that place of disappointed hope, I could not refrain from observing to myself, that the sublime magnificence of Aurora pourtrayed the splendour of that honour which I had promised myself some four years before, and which, as we travelled northward, I was leaving for ever behind me. Or did the goddess of day blush at the lack of honour, though not positive infamy, with which I was quitting the spot of my towering hopes and thwarted ambition? I am not a Roman, or I might look upon it as a retrospective omen.

We set off from the Angel—the harper had gone to repose—measured the length of High Street, for centuries the promenade of loungers ; rattled over the Corn Market and St. Giles’s, and passed the Infirmary and Observatory with the rapidity of the Jehuism of that day. We were on the road to Woodstock. The Observatory was now behind me, the first object

of my particular notice and admiration when I came, the last when I made my final exodus. I looked back upon that monument of Keene's and Wyat's architectural ingenuity, its beautiful façade, its mimicry of Minerva's temple at Athens, its appropriate apex, the heavens upheld by the shoulders of Atlas—one half of his burden beautifully gilded by the earliest beams of the rising sun. Farewell, thou seat of Aristotelian lore, architectural beauties, honour and dishonour. If ever there was a fool upon earth, that fool is a youth of two or three terms standing at Oxford; if ever there was humiliation prostrate enough to lick the dust, it is the heart of that fool, when he sees his name among the many, or when he has been plucked. I tuned my face to the north. Never since, have I beheld the globe of Atlas, the towering, ponderous dome of the Radcliffe, the towers of Merton and Magdalen, or any other prominent and obtrusive beauty of the said to be most ancient university in the world.

My companion was at my side, on whose

shoulders justice placed all my failure, disappointment, despair. Yes, he was there! we might have been the Siamese twins, inseparable save by the sacrifice of life, and his life he was determined to forfeit, or see me fairly and for ever out of Oxford without its honours and emoluments. Just then a fellowship was vacant, to which, if scholarship was a recommendation, I was entitled incomparably beyond any other candidate, especially the one who got it. But a shower of gold can enter, where learning would be repulsed at the door with contempt. The tutor was bribed by the brother of one of the opposing candidates, and when I would have requested him to accompany me to the College and announce me as a candidate, he refused to hear me, looked as black as midnight, said he was in haste, engaged, that I had no occasion to speak to him on any subject.

I wonder what bawling Hireton did with the fee. Did he make it a component part of his general hoard, add it *acervo*, mindful of the coming winter? I am surprised that it did

not operate as a mine of gunpowder. Retributive justice, however, soon overtook him—he accepted a living and grew crazed. Some attributed his madness to love, which might be true, if they meant the love of money. The all but certainty is, that he did not find the loaves and fishes so plentiful or so good as he had been led to anticipate. Did he ever after reflect on the injury he had done me, and did the recollection make, as I should expect it would, a sore place, small, may be, at the beginning, but gradually spreading; a foul, unclean disease, the leprosy of the conscience; and was he sure that it would not ultimately be identified with that gnawing worm, which a certain high and mighty personage says will never die?

Bawling Hireton was a classic—at least he wished to be thought so; did he never read of a certain artful knave, who, according to the tradition of Æschylus, was condemned by Jupiter to be tied to a rock on Mount Caucasus for thirty thousand years, an eternity to be sure, and to have his liver gnawed upon by a vulture

during all that little eternity, and that his said liver should grow all the while not one particle less? Either of these accounts is sufficient to deter any man from bribery and corruption. I dare say Hireton soon forgot that he ever took the fee and looked another way while he put it into his pocket—the reverend poacher! But if he did, so do not I—will not, shall not, cannot, while memory holds a seat in this distracted globe. But I will make him remember it too. I will send fame, trumpet-tongued, all over England, and, may be, America to boot.

CHAPTER II.

My back was now turned on Oxford, hope, ambition, fame—the hope, I mean, with which I went thither: that hope had been wrecked without a single anchor to save it on the rock of my association with the companion at my side. Now, however, when I was fairly out of sight of Oxford and beyond Woodstock, places which by association could awaken my former realms of fairy, I found in Pandora's box that there was, forsooth, as the veritable, never-lying heathen mythologists affirmed, a little, tiny spark, which cheered my

lonely, gloomy heart, and shone bright and brilliant-like (really I am at the end of my cable, as commodore Byron would say)—a meteor in Egyptian darkness, or the venerable Bede in the darkness of a barbarous age. I began to think that all was not lost, that my ærial temple of fame had been shivered, but that I might rear one more substantial.

As the coach hurried us along, and the mountain air inflated my lungs, and different objects crossed my path with the rapidity exactly of a stage coach, I found my spirits begin to ferment, my heart to beat more briskly, and I commenced a fresh excogitation of a more successful career of glory. “Hope springs eternal.” I thought of various plans which floated and danced in my brain like motes in the sunbeams, or atoms in Lucretius’s system of materialism. I had always been intended for the church, and, after various plans had in my mind been discussed and successively discarded, I determined at last that my glory should spring from my contemplated profession. I even affected to laugh at my past disappoint-

ment as *infra dig.*, beneath my notice, unworthy my recollection, not fit to be mentioned on the same day or in the same breath with the honour which I was chalking out for myself. Every theological heir of immortality stalked before me like Banquo's ghosts. What was St. Austin's wish? To hear St. Paul preach. "Yes," said I, "and my eloquence, if not my presence, shall be the basis of a wish to future ages. How many by pulpit eloquence have risen to, I will not say what—the reader may judge—*risum teneatis*? I determined yet to figure in the literary world. I would publish on some abstruse theological subject; I would be a controversialist. Fame should still expand her wings over me, only in a more holy cause. And thus did I muse, ruminate, cogitate, plan, as we were travelling on our way to the north.

So complete had been my failure and so great, considering the expectations which went with me to Oxford, that for some time prior to my leaving, I had conceived to myself very great unpleasantness in meeting my father. I had no rod to fear as formerly—blessed are they

who dread no other punishment ; but I returned to him without anything to boast of. The glory had departed from his house. On my return home in the long vacations I used to be as proud as if I had been some literary Goliath, some prodigy of learning ; but now I seemed to be lower by a yard or two in personal stature. Now, however, as I was approaching my father's residence, and when plans of future fame and self-aggrandizement had been brooded over by my addle-brains and seemed ready for hatching, I began to feel a very great desire to behold again the best of fathers. Had I been the prodigal son, he would have come to meet me, and have been glad to receive me. There never was a son more attached to a father, nor father who had a greater affection for a son ; in that respect we were like Absalom and David. Conceive, then, how I rejoiced at the proximity of our interview. I hoped to see him well ; such was his affection that, well or ill, I was sure to find him happy. I was determined to wear no disappointed face, that whatever my heart might be, my countenance should not

blab its secrets. I would speak slightly of the past, with hope and cheerfulness of the future, especially dwell on the honour of the profession for which he had designed me, the happiness with which I would embrace it, and the satisfaction to which it might lead.

Need I say that something else endeared home to me still more, made every mile appear twain and every coach to stand still? Was there something still dearer than a father—a brother, sister, mother? There were, indeed, all these endearments, father mother, sister, brother, all; but there was some one else whom I ought to have loved less, and could not but love more. What a passion is love! the elixir of man's duty, the essence of divine worship, the happiness of angels: such is love, love to God, love to man for God's sake. But there is another love, and who will deny its sovereign power? Since the creation of Eve, when did it not reign over the heart of man? Coeval with chaos, says the theogonist Hesiod. Well might he date its birth so early. What an omnipotence of passion that must be which is stronger than every other love, and with a cord no

thicker than the gossamer's web, binds and tyrannises over the human heart, not by election but by force ! What shall I call thee—how shall I address thee ? Oh, thou all-devouring flame to which all opposition is but fuel ; extinguishable only by the extinction of reason, how have I lamented for twenty long years the withering of the heart, the deadness to all other concerns, which thy destructive power has wrought !

In plain prose, love had riveted a chain round my heart, which dragged me towards the place I was now approaching, with a force inversely as the distance, so that, unlike the chain of a watch, which loses its power the nearer the evolution of the whole, it drew me the more forcibly the nearer I approached. How many ideas crowded upon my mind during the last two or three miles ! Was she well, was she faithful ? I had no doubt, and now, after all my disappointments and total discomfiture, I had with her garnered up my whole heart. I looked to her only for happiness : she was the beach on which I cast myself for salvation from the troubled ocean in

which I had been wrecked. Henceforth she was to me a happy island, one of the islands of the blessed. Now then did I forget for a moment what had made me so unhappy, and arrived safely at the principal inn in Swallowbeck.

There my companion and I parted. We had been acquainted four years, only four short years, short they now seemed, and during that brief period he had as effectually accomplished my ruin as to all University expectations, as if he had been the planet Saturn armed by astrologers and Omnipotence, as well with my literary destiny. We parted at the principal inn. The final shake of his hand—for we shook hands—the oblique cast of his eye, the contraction of his eye-brows the disdainful curl of his upper lip, and the satanic set of his teeth, all indicated the deepest regret, not at what he had done, but because he thought he could do no more. His voice was low, loud, harsh and surley, and in the curt, abrupt sentence, he said, “good-bye.” Did his last look curse me with ill fortune.

I confess candidly, gentle reader, entertain what opinion you will of my share of common sense, for some years I thought so. At any rate he cursed me with superstition. He asked me the way to a certain person's house, whom he had known in his native town. I knew the reason, reader, dost thou? He had blasted my character as a scholar at Oxford: he was determined to complete his defamation by doing the same at Swallowbeck. In my schoolboy days I had been cried up by every old wife as a "prent buke:" he was determined to give that book the reputation of being as ill-spelt, ill-printed, incorrect, and every way contemptible as ever issued from nature's shop. What was his motive? malevolence, not malice. God grant that I may never see him again. He has, however, heard of my misfortunes since: what an unction to his malignant heart! I am now at my father's house.

CHAPTER III.

I HAD hoped to find my father in good health. I am not physician enough to describe the state in which he was, and had been for several months, of which they had wholly omitted to inform me. His face had shrunk as if he was at least twenty years older than what I knew him to be, and he was suffering from an almost incessant cough. His eye-sight, too, had so far failed, that he could scarcely recognize my person: my voice, however, told him who I was.

I also found my mother and brother in very

great distress on account of his indisposition. They lamented not only as an affectionate wife and son, which they were sincerely, and unsurpassed by any ; but on account of the disqualification which his illness produced for the performance of the duties of his situation. He was a clerk in a commercial house, and did not make money for his employers without long and close seclusion in a small, confined office. The sedentary confinement, indeed, had sown and ripened the seeds of his complaint. Blessed are they who, if they must earn their bread, earn it by the sweat of their brow. The original curse for the fall of man was not half so severe, as the bane of being “cribb’d, cabin’d, confined.” Yet a clerk is proud of his pale face, a ploughman never of his ruddy, and really handsome complexion ; supposed scholarship makes the difference.

My mother and brother, when out of my father’s sight, wept and lamented, as if they were about to consign his remains to the grave immediately, and as if the shroud and the coffin, and the undertaker, and the scarfs, and hat-

bands, and gloves, and all the other paraphernalia of a funeral were already in the house. Indeed, it was not without reason ; he was exceedingly unwell, but his affliction promised to kill, not by the maiden or guillotine, by one blow and in an instant, but by inches, like the slow poison of some ancient Egyptian sorcerer. It killed, and it did not kill ; it imitated the kitten, which plays with the mouse, and will let it neither live nor die. In the midst of life he was in death ; that part of the funeral service his complaint was continually repeating.

But though it did not kill, it disqualified for the labours of the pen. His fingers were as good as ever, but his eyes could not discriminate ; a glimmering light played so before them, that sometimes he could distinguish neither letter nor line. This annoyance, however, was not incessant, but exceedingly unpleasant when any master was present, inasmuch as it completely incapacitated for all work the hour or so of its continuance. Fortunately for him they did not honour him often with their presence ; the proceeds were acceptable,

the trouble never ; they were gentlemen tradesmen. But though he was not already unable to work, he promised fair very soon to become so ; so said my mother's fears, and they spoke the truth.

“Jonadab,” said she, “your father has now spent a large sum on your education. We kept you at school until you grew a young man, and then sent you to the university, and the most expensive one, too, they say, in the world ; but we sent you to Oxford in preference, because you said you could obtain great distinction there, and rise to great preferment, get a fellowship first of all, and then a living. You were a most excellent classical scholar, you know. You said so, you remember, and so did the master.”

So far she ran on like an alarum, and then came to a dead stop. I felt myself nettled, for I knew what she was aiming at, and her circuitous way always mortified me more than it would have done coming directly to the point at once.

“Yes, mother, you certainly have spent a

deal—I admit it. But you knew the expense beforehand, or at any rate should have calculated ; and at all events, it is too late to talk about it now. It is spent and cannot be recalled.”

“ Yes, but it has cost so much more than we expected or could reckon on.”

“ You knew that it was impossible to calculate to a pound, for the master told you so, and that it would very probably cost considerably more than you would expect.”

“ Yes, yes, it is gone—we shall see it no more. It is much easier to spend money than to earn it. But it *has* cost a deal.”

“ You mean to say that I have been extravagant ?”

“ I say nothing about it—no such thing ; I only think—”

“ That I have been a profligate, squandered the greatest part of it upon nothing—upon intemperance, maybe, or gambling. I never was a gambler or a drunkard in my life.”

“ I do not say you ever were. Dear me ! you are above being spoken to. You might come back like a Christian at any rate. What you

have spent was all right, and you are welcome to it."

"What did you begin to talk about the expense for?"

"Why surely we may talk about it."

After a considerable pause, during which she took a view of her shoes, and then cast a vacant look out of the window, with a countenance as full of mischief as, to use a very common comparison of her own, an egg is full of meat, she recommenced.

"You will be very well off now, Jonadab; you can live like a gentleman."

"How am I to be better off now than formerly?" said I, tartly.

"Well, you know, your fellowship will maintain you very handsomely, until you obtain something in the church; and in the meantime, if you get a curacy, your stipend will be so much more than what you will have occasion to spend."

"I told you long since by letter, that I could not obtain a fellowship: and here I am without

a penny in my pocket except what my father sent me."

"But there were more fellowships than one; if you missed one, you could have got another, or can still."

"I tell you no, it is impossible—utterly impossible. I took no honour, and cannot therefore get a fellowship. Never mention a fellowship to me again as long as you live; if you possess one spark of affection for me as a mother ought to do, and as you value my life and immortal soul, never mention the word again."

"Why, I am sure; your father has just been saying that if he had all the money which he has spent upon you at Oxford, he could now live independent, in a poor way to be sure, but he could live."

This remark was a death-blow to me. I knew the truth of it, and that he now very much stood in need of the money. Every drop he wiped from his eye told me that what I had spent at Oxford, some of it foolishly, but not

much, most of it unavoidably, would be a very acceptable present to him now, when he clearly could not earn a livelihood much longer. I knew not what to say, and, as is usual under such perplexities, asked impertinently, or without any definite object in view, "when did he say so?" As this question was put in a subdued tone, she answered very quickly :

"When did he say so? He has said so many a time since his affliction commenced, and I am sure he spoke the truth. We have forty pounds a year to live upon, and if we had never sent you to yon spendthrift place, we should have nearly forty pounds a year more, and upon that we could live. But now, Lord, what is to become of us? But you will be able to keep us, Jonadab?"

This was said in an interrogative tone, and was, I know, from the first, the target at which all her circumlocution was aimed.

"You may depend upon it, mother, that I will support you if it ever be in my power; but, you know, I must have a beginning."

"Have it in your power! Why, there can

be no doubt that, after all your education, you can support us. You have been fed and bred so long by your poor father, who has supported us, though God knows, he never had a tithe of your learning and never but a small salary."

"Well, well, I can merely say, I will if I can. Pray, say no more about it."

All this conversation took place in at least half an hour after my entrance into the house. I had not been in a moment after the customary salutations, before she started at full speed. A call from my father in an adjoining room at this period broke off the dialogue, at the instant I thought very fortunately for me ; but the pause left me to my own cogitations, and verily I thought even my mother's jangle, delicate as was the topic, better than my own thoughts. I looked inward and found all dark, gloomy, dismal, for even hope for the moment shed not a ray to break the melancholy blackness of my heart. It was indeed darkness which may be felt. I had long known the unpleasantness of my father's situation, how sedentary and solitary,

gradually subversive of his excellent stamina, for few started life with a more iron constitution ; but constant dropping will wear through a stone, —through any thing.

For years had I seen his health giving way, and long expected the period when he would be obliged to yield to sickness and infirmities. For years during my boyhood and upwards, my utmost ambition, heart's desire and prayer had been, that I, even I, his son, his eldest son, and none other, might extricate him for ever from the dungeon they call an office, and feed and support him as he had nurtured and pampered me. If such had not been my desire and ambition, I would never have gone to Oxford. Surely it was a holy wish, hallowed by a commandment in Jehovah's own hand-writing, consecrated by the commendation of every age, no matter what might be colour, creed, civilization or barbarism. The passion ever has been and ever will be lauded, "by saint, by savage and by sage." It is the God within us, God is love. I never saw a picture I admired so much, as that of a daughter feeding a starving

father in prison from her own breast. If after this life that daughter was not an angel of light, who may or can go to heaven? talk not of exceptions. There was a Judas among the twelve, a Lucifer in heaven. Some may deride the passion I speak of, yet if derided by all the world, would it be the spirit of God within us. But not only had such been my first and ruling wish, my all-absorbing passion, but I had pledged my honour, promised in the most solemn manner, that, if my father would send me to Oxford, I would support him to the utmost of my power.

Had it not been for this promise and the expectation he entertained of assistance from me afterwards, he never would have put himself to so much expense. He would have been a madman if he had. It was therefore a speculation. Oh! thought I, if I had not been defrauded of that fellowship, what would I not have done for my father! He should have come forth into the open air, and lived the rest of his life free as the mountain breeze. But it was not God's will, was it? I should have done my

best. I should have exposed the knavish cupidity of the tutor. God helps those who help themselves. The whole constitution of nature and the government of the universe proclaim the truth daily and every moment. Let every man who wishes to have the aid of heaven take for his motto, "a shoulder set to the wheel." God and nature abhor, not only idleness,—for that every fool will admit,—but want of spirit: "*audaces fortuna juvat.*" The poet who wrote these words had read nature.

During my mother's absence, which I knew would not be very long, for she had not yet disburdened her mind, I attempted to determine what course to pursue. A curacy was one and the first object to be attained, the second, a school together with it, endowed or established by myself. Even in that piping time of peace, I would have enlisted and campaigned without danger, had not my promise to repay my father in kind, been manacles to my hands and shackles to my feet. But my reverie was now interrupted by the return of my mother. I saw that she was very anxious to speak, and though afraid to

offend, determined to be free ; and, as I knew there would be no peace for her or others, until she had fairly turned her mind inside out on the subject of our present position and prospects, I thought the best plan would be to let the reservoir off at once and end it. I therefore encouraged her to speak her mind without hesitation or reserve. I began the subject which I knew floated uppermost.

“ Well, mother, what must be done ? ”

“ Done ! what has been done ? what situation have you provided for yourself ? ”

I told her that at present I was wholly unprovided and must look out for a situation as well as I could.

“ But why did you not look out for one in Oxford, where you could so easily have obtained one ? The great men there would have given you a situation, if you had asked them. What could you be thinking about to come down hither without a situation ? ”

“ You have conceived, mother, a very mistaken notion of what you call the great men in Oxford. The tutors of a college, at least of the

college to which I had the misfortune to belong, will be glad to receive from you payment for tuition and other items, generally included in the term *Battels*, and will encourage you to spend your all, and more than what is really yours, for the good of the *house*, but with their interest, ceases their regard for you. Leave Oxford, and they know you no more. Ask them for a favour, assistance to earn a morsel of bread, and they are surprised at your folly ; ask a second time, and they marvel at your impudence. No, I must not look to the college for aid. I know them too well. We made a sad mistake when we thought that, if I only went to college, I should never want a place. The college, I went to was, I confess, in this respect the worst. The long and short of what I have to do now, is, to obtain a curacy, and with it, if possible, a school, and thus I may perhaps be able to do something for you, and thus let us settle the matter, and say no more about it at present."

But instead of reverting to some other subject, my proposal seemed only to sharpen appetite for

further parley. Her impatience and voice mounted together, when my father, who knew her temper, and suspected that she was upbraiding me with what could not now be amended, entered the room.

“I wish you would endeavour, my dear, to bear what is past with patience, and to forget it. Jonadab has been unfortunate, but how many have been the same! All cannot prosper alike.”

Then addressing himself to me he said.

“Have you any views of a curacy? for I presume that will be the first thing you will look out for.”

“None. Curacies near Oxford are small and insufficient generally for a man’s support. Besides, I tell you candidly, I have no friends there.”

“I fear you have none here. You have lost old Mr. Langley’s friendship, and from his well known temper, I doubt not, irrecoverably. Curacies also, you know, are not only of small value, but very difficult to be obtained. Did you do your best to obtain a situation before you

left Oxford? An ushership would do, if it would lead to a curacy."

"An ushership I should be most happy to accept, and I will certainly write to the tutors for their assistance, which they can as easily give me here as if I were there, provided they be only willing, but that is the question. I have little faith in their disposition to help an absent member."

"Well, we must hope for the best, and do the best we can for ourselves, and trust in him who never forsakes those who look to him. Let us not repine at misfortunes until we cannot see a blessing when it comes."

He was now called away upon business, and my mother chose to take herself away without saying another word, for what purpose, the why and the wherefore, must now for ever remain a secret, the important information at the time not having been obtained by me.

CHAPTER IV.

I WAS left alone with my brother, who was several years younger than myself. A melancholy dejection at the present posture and future prospects of our affairs, brought tears into his eyes, more especially the last words of my father. I could see that there was something else in his mind labouring to be brought forth, but with very considerable and manifest pains of parturition. He wanted to say something, that was clear, and yet what could be the reason of his hesitation, I was unable to conjecture. In common parlance an idea crossed my mind,

but to speak the truth, it entered and never went out. After the excitement of other matters it now floated uppermost; there was a delicacy, however, in making inquiry. Ill as my father was, at death's door to all appearance, and crest-fallen as I had returned, without honour, without prospect, I was ashamed to ask lest the inquiry might seem to argue an indifference in my mind to these real and important causes for grief and lamentation. My Dulcinea he never saw except when he went into the town, and therefore by way of introduction I asked.

“Have you been in the town lately? I think I must call upon Mr. Scrapling, the vicar, and ask him for a title, or if he can procure me one.”

To make the inquiry less pointed and bare-faced I spoke of Mr. Scrapling and a title, but he understood in an instant, the drift of my question; that was clear by his countenance.

“Yes, it will be necessary for you to call upon him and also to ask him, but I had much rather you had made your debut elsewhere; not but every man must have a beginning, and no one

can be expected to acquit himself as well at first as afterwards, but I know how much you will dislike it. As for stipend, you will receive from him, not a small one, but literally none. If he gives you a title, you must serve three years for it. His last curate, a Welchman, though he had a family dependent upon him and nothing but a few pounds saved, never received a penny from him in money. He obtained nothing but a title for deacon and priest's orders, with once or twice, but only once or twice, a dinner."

It is true, I had, not simply a dislike, but an insurmountable repugnance to commence in my native town, though I did not like to confess it.

"There never was," said I, "a more complete church-jobber: he would sell the communion-wine, if any body would buy it; he is more wicked than Simon Magus himself. I think it exceedingly sinful to obtain ordination by working for it; whatever people may call it, it is nothing but a purchase, every man's labour is so much money; money is given and received for it all the world over. I should not care so

much for commencing where I have been brought up and am well known and have been ever since my childhood ; but, if I may have my choice, I had infinitely rather not be a clergyman than buy myself into the profession in such a way, for it is nothing but buying. I think purchasing a living for a clergyman, either by and for himself or more indirectly, no more like the sin of Simon Magus, than purchasing a house or an estate ; the legislature only has made it sinful by precluding the possibility of such a purchase without perjury. If any thing we can do resembles that sin, it is purchasing ordination, giving any compensation for it, no matter what, money or labour in the church, or teaching the incumbent's children. This is really a very wicked thing, and, if I were in orders this moment through such means, I should not consider myself a clergyman, nor would I do duty as such. I would certainly betake myself to some other mode of obtaining a livelihood."

" Well, I am not able to judge whether it be that sin or not. No doubt, many do obtain

orders in that way, indeed, I have no doubt that Mr. Scrapling never gave anything but a title to any curate he has had since he became the vicar. Nevertheless, it will be necessary for you to call upon him ; he will have to sign your testimonial to the bishop ; but, if you do not ask him for his own title, I see not how you can ask him to procure for you any other person's."

"He will never offer me his own title, and about that, therefore, I shall have no difficulty in managing ; and as to his assistance, I am quite sure it matters not whether I ask him or not. As long as he has a title of his own to give, he never will get me any other. Promises he will give me as fast as he can speak ; and never think two minutes after of what he has said."

"But how very strange all the inhabitants will think it if you never ask him to assist you ; especially if you should remain at home any considerable time, which I think you are very likely to do, without a situation, and in want of one."

"That is very true, and I must ask him ;

but, as my father said, let us hope for the best, and say no more about it now."

After a pause, during which I was anxious to introduce the subject nearest my heart, I said ;

" Our parish church is a very handsome one and easy, I have been told, to be heard in. Is Mr. Scrapling well-liked ? Has he a good congregation ?"

Again his countenance told me that he understood the scope of my inquiry.

" Yes, it is very well frequented, especially by the rich ; but indeed generally by all the parishioners. Though no very good scholar, he is not disliked and yet he is not the most popular. I was there on Sunday. I saw Jane in the street twice"

Now I knew very well that something was the matter. My brother knew my heart so well that, had all been right, he would have entered upon the subject with alacrity, and poured out all he knew unasked and almost without waiting for an opportunity. Twice did he see her in the street ? Then sickness could not be the cause.

“Is she well? How did she look?”

“Not so well as I have seen her, though not positively ill. It is reported that she is going to be married.”

“Indeed,” said I, and my heart was at my mouth, and my eyes grew so dim, that I could not have recognised my brother, had I not known that he was before me. “Indeed,” said I; but the word trembled on my lips, and the last letter never passed them. My breath could not reach my lips, at least not enough to complete the articulation, and push, so to say, the letter out of my mouth into the open air. I did my utmost to suppress or at least repress the emotion and to show some incredulity, or at least apathy; but in spite of all I could do, my face and indeed whole person turned half-way from my brother. The shock on my mind gave a sort of rotatory motion to my body. I might have received a tremendous blow on one side of my face, which made me revolve ninety degrees at least. There was, also, for a moment or somewhat more, an abstraction of thought, so that in mind I was no more in the presence of my brother than if

I had been a hundred miles off ; and though I wanted to speak as if nothing were the matter, and had a sort of consciousness that I ought to do so immediately, yet for the life of me could I not drag back my mind to the starting post. He perceived my confusion and speechlessness, and having, himself, poor fellow, known pangs of disappointed love, he was really more sorry than I was myself. Indeed my sensation was not grief, but an emotion, which, for want of a better name, I must call nondescript. I think it partook more of anger, indignation, or resentment than of sorrow. I will leave a more accurate description and appropriate name to those who at present feel the emotion, and are possessed of a more copious and select vocabulary.

“ It is reported, to be sure ; but that has been said, you know, many a time, of you and me, and I have not heard any respectable person say so who was likely to know the truth. Martha, the servant is my informant, and what can she know but vague, unfounded rumours ? Besides, I cannot think she would have him.”

It is surprising how easy it is to persuade a man what he wishes to believe, especially a lover; and yet I am unable to say whether I believed or disbelieved. So strange and indescribable was my then state of mind, wounded as it had been by recent disappointment, and gashed afresh now as it was by this severest stab of all, that I knew not what I believed or did not believe, desired, or was indifferent to. His last words, however, informed me who was reputed her successful suitor, and the whole of his palaver gave me a little time for the recollection of my thoughts and spirits. I recovered in some degree my equilibrium, off which the shock had fairly thrown me.

“And whom is she going to be married to—at least, as the *on dit* says?”

This I said, not because I had any doubt, for I had heard such a report many a time before, but because it was necessary to say something, and I was glad to find that I had recovered the use of my tongue.

“Mr. de Witt, your old master. You know it was said some years since, that he had paid

his addresses to her and was accepted ; by the family, at any rate, and some said, by her too ; but I think it is merely because he visits there very often. I cannot think she would marry him, he is so ugly, twenty years, at least, her senior, and subject to hereditary insanity. He has been, you know, repeatedly out of his mind. Pshaw ! it is utterly impossible. I know no young lady in the town that would marry him, if she were never to be married, though not possessed of Jane's fortune, and in personal attractions much her inferior."

Now all this was strictly true. He was at least twenty years her senior, but, judging from his personal appearance, and standing at the university, I should say twenty-five. He was an old fellow of a college, what they call the senior of a batch, each past the meridian before he succeeded, not by learning or merit, but by standing, to a fellowship. He had been begging and praying God for five-and-twenty years, at least, to take a certain poor, afflicted, rich college incumbent out of the miseries of this sinful world, a dear brother unto himself,

and had been searching all that time, without the failure of a single week, the obituary of the newspaper published in his neighbourhood to find his name in the register of the dead. The proprietors of an Insurance office were not better acquainted with the bills of mortality or the mode of calculating annuities. He had corresponded continually with the other fellows of his college, and the neighbours of the incumbent, to receive information as to the probable duration of his remaining life from physical appearances. Judging, therefore, from the length of time he had been thus stretched on the tenter-hooks of expectation, he must be now at least twenty-five years her senior. But this was not all nor the chief objection. Seniority by twenty-five years was, one would think, anything but a recommendation of a suitor to the acceptance of a young and beautiful lady ; but his face ! *bon Dieu !* his face ! who shall attempt to describe the lineaments divine ?

The small-pox, that most formidable archfiend to the beauty of the human countenance,

had dug many a hole, though not so many, by a great deal, as upon some ; but the cavities or indentures in De Witt's visage were so large, and at a distance made such a visible shadow for the perspective sketcher, that verily one was forcibly reminded by it of the mountains and valleys in the moon's orb, visible even to the naked eye, and much more through artificial aids. Only think of a limner taking a portrait of this lunar visage of De Witt.

“ Like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fiesolè,
Or in Val d'Arno, to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.”

But it was not merely the excavations which that disease had made, that were by any means the principal traces of its havoc. This confluent small-pox, as it is called, seemed to have fused the whole mass of his face, like the metal in a crucible, yet not completely, only so much as to make some parts appear to have run in liquefaction into one another. If two pieces of

lead placed near each other be partially fused, they will form a junction so as to show clearly that it has been by fusion. Thus was it with De Witt's face. The nose was a prominent mass above the general surface, for what nose is not? but on the sides it appeared for all the world to have been soldered on. It was a noble proboscis, which would not have disgraced the royal family of great Britain: a similar one in bold relief belonged to a late, by the grace of God, king of one island or more, and defender of the faith.

His face, if symmetry be regarded, was considerably too large for his outward man, and surmounted then with a pate still more unsymmetrically proportioned, naked, smooth, shining like a mirror. I remember once seeing and taking particular notice of him, immediately after he was said to have been ill of the typhus fever, and never shall I forget the face exhibited by that pedagogue. From his recent illness, from which he had just recovered, one would have supposed that he would have been in complexion pallid, cadaverous, and in the expansion

of his orb shrunk and diminished. Quite the reverse. Never did I see or hear of such a convalescent from what is called malignant typhus. His face was the full moon personified, or rising sun of horizontal rotundity, red as if he had drunk without constitutional injury all the wine ever shipped from Oporto ; far more than usually large, was compared by some at the time to a boiled turnip, and I do assure you, gentle reader, and beg you will not question my veracity, it shone, as I have already observed, like a mirror. What a face to attract the admiration of a young lady ! But Desdemona admired and loved the blackamoor : true, but there has been many a handsome black face, yes, in Africa. His cheeks projected until they were on a level with his nose, as noble a promontory as was that member. What a cherub !

But notwithstanding these, to me, personal repulsions, she might not think him so ill-favoured or in the least repulsive ; a woman's eyes are not those of a man. Still, even at this moment, my rival though he was, I cannot think that my eyes were magnifying lenses,

which caricatured his features. Admitting, however, the possibility of her feeling no fastidious distaste to either his age or person, what could she and her family think of his hereditary failing? “*Mens sana in corpore sano*,” a sound mind in a sound body, has always been esteemed a blessing beyond all price; the contrary must, of course, be as great an evil.

His sisters, though permitted to walk at large without the restraint of a straight jacket, were scarcely ever sane, and one of his brothers died in an asylum. He himself had been frequently raving, but at other times, not only sensible, but clever. As I have already observed, he had recently had, so it was said, the typhus fever, but every one could observe that it must have been a typhus of a very peculiar and novel description, which any pathologist would be puzzled how to classify. He was tied down to his bed, and he raved and bawled, but the typhus, it is well known, will produce this turbulent effect upon the brain, and this vociferous propensity upon the vocal organs.

Still, it was remarked, that the typhus

effected a marvellous diminution of the outward man, so that the complexional and personal effects of disease would be visible for some time after. The reverse was the case with De Witt's reputed fever, for immediately on his appearance after a most violent attack of typhus, he looked more bloated, sleek, and rubicund than prior to his indisposition. That he was, however, often deranged, or to use the favourite expression of Judge Vaughan, that "reason was often unseated," was well known from "uncontaminated evidence." It was no secret ; the term typhus was only a trifling and very excusable misnomer. I once met him one summer, about six o'clock in the morning, walking evidently at the utmost stretch of his locomotive powers, his legs succeeding each other with the rapidity of the spokes of a coach-wheel, and he had a gaiter on one leg and none on the other, He went at that rate some distance into the fields, and then returned without having accomplished any definite object.

But this might be imputed by some to mere mental abstraction, what they call absence of

mind. I have no doubt that it was an aberration of reason. Considering all these circumstances, therefore, his personal appearance, age and insanity, it was at last fairly concluded by me and my brother, that the rumour was only the idle gossip of the partially informed, founded upon conjecture, or what was not less probable, a wilful untruth.

CHAPTER V.

It was on a beautiful summer's day in June, not long after my return to Swallowbeck, that I took a walk into the fields as had been my daily wont in days when hope told a flattering tale and I was full of glee. I sauntered slowly and dejectedly down the noble valley, in which my father's house stood and down which it looked, never less alone than when alone. I rambled at least three miles before I turned to retrace the distance. The purling pebbly brook wound through the meadows, sometimes returning in its serpentine course so far as to ascend the valley

instead of flowing down it. How often, when a schoolboy, had I fished in this stream for minnows and gudgeons, with line and fingers, or dammed up some part and baled out the element, in which alone they could escape from me, or grasped the twisted eel which eluded my grasp and sought for its usual concealment in the mire ! How often in the still, clear deep had I tickled the spotted beauty of the brook ! But those were days when I had rushed to the amusement with the animation peculiar to a release from confinement in the buzzing school. Yet they were not far distant in the solemn, stately march of time ; but they were schoolboy days, though not far off, never to return.

What a peculiar pleasure combined with melancholy regret accompanies the recollection of our schoolboy days, especially when the different localities in the vicinity of the school are associated in our minds with the various pastimes and amusements of the period.

“ Dear the schoolboy spot
We ne’er forget, though there we are forgot.”

Thus sings Byron, and, well or ill, he sings the truth. It is dear, it is sweet, but its dear sweetness is that of the remembrance of some departed friend.

I turned out of the beaten path and followed the brook in its devious course, sometimes advanced and anon receded, and I could not but moralise on the parable it presented of my past life. How had I brawled and clamoured and hurried on, as I fancied, in my advancement to the glory I so much coveted, and how had I retreated as far from it? yet, said I, one may finally struggle forwards. Assuredly I had found my own level. I knew better than before, my capabilities, of which, God knows, I had been grossly ignorant. But in spite of my moralising or endeavours to moralise, the idea of Jane and the matrimonial rumour obtruded themselves upon my mind, demanded attention and would not be denied. I pshawed and stamped and had recourse to all the expedients that I could think of to repulse the impertinent intruder, but not a moment could I fairly get quit of it. No matter then, let me give the subject a fair au-

dience once more, that is, for the thousand and first time in the course of a few days, and try if that will not be the means of banishing it completely, and for some time at least setting my mind at rest.

I did every thing I could to persuade myself of the utter impossibility she should ever yield to the wishes or menaces of her friends, supposing they did wish her, which was more than I knew, or that she should ever conceive a wish herself, to marry Mr. de Witt. I dwelt on her unquestionable attachment to me, a passion which I knew, if any one did, the impossibility of subduing; on my own personal attractions, contrasted with the forbidding, and, it is hardly too bad to say, disgusting aspect of my supposed rival; on the respectability and probable affluence I might attain to, not inferior at least to his, though he had recently succeeded to a valuable college living; but what prospect cannot love hold out to that imagination over which it rules.

I ascended a short distance the acclivity from the valley, whence I had a full view of their

house and of much of their property. Is it possible, said I, for the proprietors of such a residence and such an estate to suffer, much more urge, their beautiful and blooming daughter to ally herself to so much—but I will say no more about him, lest envy may seem to dictate my words and guide my pen. I persuaded myself, —I did more—I made myself as sure as of the existence of the house before me, that he was not the destined of heaven for such hymeneal bliss. Again hope began to reanimate my heart, fire my brain and awake the phantoms of imagination, which disappointment for some time had laid.

I fancied her mine, my own already, not to be, but in actual enjoyment. I revelled in the intoxication which hope alone can give, the only heaven on earth, for anticipation is always greater felicity than enjoyment. No happiness in this world can equal the intensity of bliss, which hope not only pictures but actually confers. I was thus rioting in the sunshine of hope, and conjuring up fairy realms of bliss, and was not aware that I had again descended into the valley and was

standing by the margin of the brook near a broad basin formed by the eddy, where the schoolboys had been in the habit of bathing. My mind returned from her excursion into the regions of inagination as suddenly as a bird falls when shot dead in the air, I know not why or wherefore, and I as instantly said aloud,

“How often have I plunged into the water here! Here it was I first learned to swim, and, for the purpose of acquiring an art foreign to my own element, I have bathed in this place twenty times a day.” Such was the fact. “Where now are the many who have bathed with me and dabbled and dipped and swam and floated, backwards and forwards? Many are no more, many have repeated their last lesson, their paternoster, their Lord have mercy, and have turned their faces to the wall, and then mingled with the dust of the mothers who brought them into the world with so much joy and sorrow. And some are men of business, plodding the mercantile path to wealth.”

Again my mind was sinking with these reveries into a cold, comfortless gloom, and then

again Jane and marriage and prosperity and happiness rose up before me and drove away these dismal spectres into airy nothing, and I began to be cheerful, and the sun shone flashing upon the water, and I laughed and put myself into motion, when a soft tread behind me on the velvet sward changed my mood and posture together.

“ Well, Mr. Rechab, is it usual with students to laugh at running brooks ?”

I declare, when first the sound of his feet startled me into attention, I thought, I knew not why, that Jane had been at my side and had surprised me with her name in my heart, if not in my mouth. But he was the sire of one of my old school-fellows. I and his son had often pored over the same passage, talked very knowingly over the extremely delicate remarks of Juvenal, for we used no expurgated editions, and he was now a member of the most honourable profession of the law, that is an attorney, alias a solicitor, for some prefer the latter appellation as more genteel, alias in general and broad Yorkshire, a limb.

I was exceedingly glad to meet with old Mr. Scratch, not only for "auld lang syne," but because I instantly thought he would be a channel of communication, true and authentic, respecting the rumour which had caused me as much alarm, as the Reform Bill, when first proposed and stated, did the Tory side of the House. Much small talk passed between us, but shift not your position, gentle reader, with uneasiness or impatience, lest I should cram down your gizzard, were you willing to gulp, all the twiddle twaddle of the would-be parson and student of Coke and Littleton. But it is absolutely necessary for the purpose I have in writing this veritable piece of psychological autobiography, that you should know something further about the rumour.

"Your old master, Mr. Rechab, has got, I am most happy to state (stating a case was very legal), a very valuable living in this county."

Mr. Scratch had a most impressive manner of giving emphasis to any important word in a sentence, and that was, together with a heavier intonation and significant shake of the voice, a shake of the head which he now employed at

the aforesaid words "very valuable." I was exceedingly glad, however, at hearing this. Without ceremony and very naturally it introduced an inquiry, which I should have found considerable delicacy in making directly, lest Mr. Scratch might have heard of my attachment to Jane, which, though not blazed abroad, had been broached.

"Yes, it is doubtless a good living, but do you think the mastership he is going to relinquish for it is not better?"

"Better! it is not a tithe of the income."

"But the farmers are every where refusing to pay tithes, and it seems as if they could not be forced. What then will become of his fine living?"

"I know nothing of what is about to come or what will be: I only know that at present it is a *very* valuable living."

"Why, what is the value of it? Will it keep him?"

"Keep him! Why, you know nothing about it, it seems. Keep him! I reckon it will: if it would not, he would have little chance to marry

a beautiful young lady of great accomplishments and accustomed to the most respectable mode of living."

Gracious heavens ! I cannot think at this moment what prevented me from knocking him down. Every word he spoke was a dagger, an insult which deserved a duel, a provocation which drove me mad. He was walking before me, and I could not refrain from grinning and clenching my fist. True, she was so, young, beautiful, a lady, accomplished, accustomed to respectable life ; but what business had he to talk of him marrying that lady ? His words had floored me. Before I had rattled on like Cicero against Cataline or Demosthenes *pro coroná*, or orator Hunt, or a spouter at a Pitt-club, or an old wife over a glass of the crater and a pipe of tobacco.

But now I was dumb, not because unable to speak, but because I was afraid of speaking in a passion to a man, who, I well knew, whatsoever reports might circulate and whether true or false, was not in the least to be blamed for them. Beside I was afraid of felling him. If he could

have seen me, he would have wondered what upon earth could be the matter with me. I danced about and bit my lips, fingers, fist and arm, as if I had felt a cat-o'-nine tails about my back, and had bitten at a bullet to keep me from feeling. I kept silence so long however, that he began to turn round, which he did rather slowly and pompously not having the best supporters, to see if I had not abruptly left him to talk to himself, which I very easily might have done, as we were walking on the grass, and my footsteps were to him no doubt inaudible. When I saw him veering about, of course I laid a snaffle on the mouth of my passion, and drew up as quietly and steadily as possible, and certainly much to my own admiration. I also found a tongue which I had lost so long.

“And who,” said I, rather fiercely as if he had been telling a lie, which made his eyes larger than I had ever seen them before, “and who is this beautiful accomplished lady, accustomed to the most respectable sphere of life, who is going to marry, forsooth, heaven save the mark, the Rev. Mr. de Witt? The epithets you have

applied to her ladyship, half a hundred of them at least, must be ironical or meant to soften the caricature. You have been studying Dean Swift's *Art of Sinking*."

"Who? what! did you never hear of Miss Jane Seymour, a beautiful, accomplished young lady? Has she not been most respectably brought up? Are you a Swallowbeck man and have never seen her?"

"Would I never had seen her," said I to myself, but no matter, it cannot be true: he is one of the many whom the report has reached: it is odd though that he should believe it.

"Is she really going to be the bride of Mr. de Witt?"

"Oh, there is no doubt about that: it is certain on unquestionable evidence."

It is natural for a lawyer to talk about unquestionable evidence, but nevertheless I began to be afraid to ask what that evidence was.

"What unquestionable evidence is there, if I may be allowed to ask?"

"Evidence! bless your life, there is no reason to doubt it. It is in every body's mouth. (S),

thought I, has many a lie been.) The portion and wedding-day have been fixed and all arrangements made and settled."

"You talk, Mr. Scratch, of portions being fixed and everything arranged and settled, as if you had had something to do with it. Will you think it impertinent in me to ask, have you been the solicitor employed on the occasion? Mind you, I am not so impudent as to inquire into the amount of fortune, for with that I have no concern."

Having run through this sentence of a mile in length, as it appeared to me, with great trepidation and a palpitating heart, which made me speak as if I had been out of breath, I positively held my breath for a reply.

"No, I have not been employed, but I know that some one has been, and that the report is correct. Miss Screech, a near neighbour of mine, who is intimately acquainted with the family, was told so by Mrs. Seymour herself and that an early day was fixed."

Though it was still all hearsay and I had my

doubts, if not certainty, as to its falsehood, I think my state, mental and physical as well, was what it would have been had it been true. I trembled all over, could not keep the path, could not draw my handkerchief out of my pocket, which I attempted to do, though I knew not what for : my hands were as paralyzed as in the relaxation of sleep or benumbed with cold. It was well he was before me and possessed not eyes behind as well as before. He was too old to have the Argus-eyes of a lover, so that my confusion confounded wholly escaped his notice. I had only power to say with the faintness of an expiring whisper,

“ Did you hear Miss Screech say so ? ”

“ I did,” was his answer.

He now began to talk about learning and the universities, and what he considered their advantages and defects. He had read much of Newton's works and knew, I have little doubt, as much about the Principia as about the law. Quotations from Shakespeare too interlarded and garnished his common conversation. A deal

of things no doubt he said, but, as I am alive this moment, it was only a word here and there which penetrated so far into my ear as to reach the cerebrum and print on it an idea. Isolated words struck on my mind, but not a single half member of a sentence. I could not hear or listen. I was a thousand miles off, carried into the third heaven, where I saw verily things which I cannot utter. He roused me, however, by a question: though my soul was in the clouds, I could recall it.

“Do you not think a mathematical education much preferable to a merely classical one?”

“Yes,” said I, or at least I think I said so.

“Many think mathematics the best logic, and I am decidedly of their opinion. They strengthen the mind and give it imperceptibly a habit of arguing. They bring it up, indeed to ratiocination, to which it requires to be nurtured and drilled as to anything else. Every demonstration in Euclid is a lesson in the art of reasoning. Don’t you think so, Mr. Rechab? Eh! Don’t you think so?”

“Yes.”

“That is the reason I prefer Cambridge to Oxford: they study the mathematics there to such perfection. What competition there is too amongst them! What an honour it is to be a wrangler! A first wrangler deserves to have his name written in gold: he is greater than the king on his throne. You have no honours at Oxford, Mr. Rechab?”

“No.”

This answer I made as mechanically, as a tyro in logic argues at Oxford after the Aristotelian system by A. B. C. I had not at the moment sense to see what he was driving at. He knew that I had gone to Oxford with great expectations, and had returned as bare of honour as his old coat was of nap, and he was determined to gall me a little about it. I had triumphed over his son at school, and now he was resolved to triumph over me, that is, to trample upon one already fallen.

“It is a pity they have no distinctions at Oxford, so famous an university as it is, because honour is so irresistible a stimulus to exertion. The young men would labour a thousand times

more assiduously, did they work for glory. Are not you of my opinion, Mr. Rechab ? Eh ? Don't you think so, Mr. Rechab ?”

“ Yes, exactly so.”

“ I wonder they never thought of instituting some honourable classification, for the purpose of exciting competition and exertion. Did you never hear of such a thing ? Did no one ever propose it ?”

“ No.”

“ You are quite sure then there are no honours to be obtained in Oxford for the best scholarship ? The best scholar and the poorest are alike ? Eh ?”

“ Yes.”

I was at this time and for some time had been wrapt up in my own thoughts, as the reader will easily perceive, and my simple yes and no were replies to questions which I really did not understand, merely because I did not attend to them. My ear heard, but my mind did not receive : they had through the ear knocked at the door, but the understanding was not at home. But this monosyllabic mode of answer-

ing, the old malignant limb understood as proceeding from my shame and confusion of face, because I had not obtained any honours myself, and thought that I was endeavouring to elude the disgrace by falsely asserting the non-existence of such honour and consequently the impossibility of obtaining a non-entity. My mind was therefore now recalled from its vagaries by the great awkward hobbling figure before me coming to a dead stop at my last yes, and commencing a slow revolution on his two ugly pivots. I knew no more than the man in the moon what he was turning for, for I had known neither his queries nor my own answers.

“And so there are no honours at Oxford? nothing like what they call classes, first and second and under the line?”

“To be sure there are.”

“I thought you said there were none.”

“No such thing, I could not: it was impossible. I never did.”

“The devil you did not: you or I must be dreaming. My ears told me that you denied it more than once.”

“Then I can merely say that your ears have told you an untruth, and I do not envy you the possession of them.”

“I will take my oath of it and swear the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I said—you are quite sure there are no honours to be obtained in Oxford? and your answer was, yes.”

“There is no doubt by yes, I meant there were honours instituted there. I never could think of denying what is so well and universally known.”

He eyed me with a very intelligent elevation of his eyelids and a sardonic, insulting conformation of mouth,

“And pray, Mr. Rechab, if I may make bold to ask the question—”

“There is no boldness about it, Mr. Scratch, nor needs there all this palaver and humbug about what you know just as well as I do. I took no honours.”

“Upon my word, Mr. Rechab, it was not my intention to offend you. I am sorry to find that I have unfortunately, and, I do assure you, quite

unintentionally, happened to probe an apparently very painful sore. Believe me, I am very sorry for it. And so you did not think it worth your while to take an honour: it is no proof of scholarship perhaps: the best scholars perhaps refuse it as *infra dig*."

If he had taken my heart into the ball of his hand, and grasped it with his fingers and thumb and wrung it until another drop of blood could not have been expressed, the pain could not have equalled the mortification which every word of his infused like a deadly poison into my soul. The honour he spoke of had been my very existence, the air on which I breathed, the life-blood which kept my heart in motion, and now I heard myself for the first time taunted for having aspired to what the event proved to have been beyond my reach. What could I do or say? I could not conceal the chagrin which he inflicted. Though I had no glass to behold my face in, I knew my eye was dim, my face colourless. But offending is defending: to save your own life, shoot your antagonist. I cast in his teeth several slippery, dishonourable tricks in h

legal career which had formerly come to my knowledge, and concluded with the following *morceau* of Billingsgate rhetoric :

“ Has your son Gehazi left Swallowbeck, or does he still continue here a disgrace to the town, his father and the profession ? But he is now in London, is he not ? where, if he escape the gallows, he may rob and blackguard, and never be heard of. It was high time for him to leave here, for, though not transported by law, he is so by public execration. I congratulate you upon your hopeful son. If you expect him to obtain distinction, except such as he has among profligates and rogues, you have faith to remove mountains. Good day, Mr. Scratch, good day, Sir. I shall be glad to hear of Gehazi being on the woolsack : *cælum ruat*.”

Here fortunately we reached the place where the foot-paths diverged to our separate homes, and he, I believe, as well as I, was much obliged to the road for having the kindness and politeness to put an end to an harangue, which in Greece and Rome they called a philippic, in Yorkshire they call blackguardism. But who

can describe, what tongue tell, what heart conceive, the mood in which I now wended my way home? Misfortunes tread on one another's heels, are very sociable, birds of a feather which flock together, but birds of prey. His bad news was misfortune enough, he needed not have coupled with it jibes and jeers. The old sinner, however, stated the case for the prosecution and I replied. It is remarkable that, though my mind was thus harrassed by disappointment in love and ambition and by the insults above, so far it never for moment occurred to me to seek relief in a glass and a pipe.

CHAPTER VI.

THE taunts and insults were an ill wind which had blown me this good, that for a considerable time they took off the edge of that uneasiness which the bad tidings respecting Jane had inflicted. I returned home in an indescribable quandary, irritated, dejected, in high spirits from provocation, in low through fear and something like disappointed love. I unbosomed myself to one who was no Job's comforter, my brother. He instantly burst forth into a torrent of abuse against the veracity of Miss Screech, rated her as such a notorious from house to house gossip, tale-

bearer, backbiter, gadding Dinah, exaggerator, inventress, and so forth, that verily I would not have given a *sou* for her evidence, if she had kissed the Bible until it had been as covered with saliva as if prepared for the digestion of a boa-constrictor. I therefore felt again relieved of a most intolerable incubus, and directed my thoughts into a more useful channel. Intending myself for the church, I commenced in good earnest a proper course of theological studies, and furbished up again a deal of knowledge which I had for some time suffered to lie undisturbed and gradually to dissolve into the mist of oblivion.

It was determined also by myself and whole family, that I should immediately pay my respects to the vicar and ask him for assistance. Having, contrary to the expectations of all, agreeably to some, and to the no small regret of others, so completely failed at Oxford, I was almost ashamed to show my face out of doors. But it was necessary for my face to be bronzed, so without any further demur I repaired to the vicarage. My

admission was instantaneous, I believe that I was expected, for Mr. Scrapling was exceedingly cordial and kind; and knowing, it appears, how long I had been at home, expressed his surprise and regret that I had not called sooner. The truth was, as I learned afterwards, his curate was expected to leave soon and he was on the look out for a successor, a labourer, worthy or unworthy, who should never receive his hire. I told him immediately that I was inquiring for a title, and should be much obliged to him for his assistance.

“Do you know, Mr. Rechab, that curacies are exceedingly difficult to be obtained. It is such an honourable profession, you know, that every one of respectable family is rushing into it, without any regard; I fear, Mr. Rechab, I say, without any regard, I very much fear, to the divine call. It is an awful thing, Mr. Rechab, really it is a most awful thing. I am shocked to think that so many should take this honour to themselves without being called.”

Here the reverend spiritual friend, the pastor of the parish, appeared to suffer insupportable

distress. I almost thought he was about to shed tears, and he shook his knee by the spring of his foot with astonishing rapidity, which doubtless proceeded from his internal emotion at the impiety in question. But he ceased speaking, evidently I could perceive, for some remark from me which might show in what direction the wind of my mind blew.

“No doubt, it is very wrong if they do offer themselves for orders without being called as the Scriptures express it, but how is a man to know that he is called?”

“You speak like a very good and wise young man, really like a very good Christian, Mr. Rechab, and I am very glad, Mr. Rechab, exceedingly glad to hear you express so much wisdom, and I think your question, Mr. Rechab, a very important, a vitally important inquiry. It is dreadful to think, Mr. Rechab, most awful indeed, that so many should wish to take orders merely for the sake of a little temporal interest, worldly pelf, Mr. Rechab, mere filthy lucre, Mr. Rechab, which they cannot take with them,

you know, and must so soon, so very soon, leave behind them."

"It is certainly very wrong to rush into the profession merely for the sake of the emoluments, to which it may lead; but what do you think the best proof that a man is properly called? Don't you think his having a suitable education and his having been long inclined and intended, the best proof of a spiritual call to the ministry? If not, what in your opinion is the best and surest?"

"The best, Mr. Rechab, the best criterion; but I will not say the best, the only, the sole proof to be relied upon, is a desire for the honour of being a minister of the blessed Gospel. Let this honour be everything, the only thing you covet. Have no regard for pelf, Mr. Rechab, no regard whatever."

"Then you mean to say, that no man should wish even so much as to live by the profession. He should labour in the vineyard without hire."

"Most assuredly, Mr. Rechab, most assuredly, that is my opinion. Saint Paul maintained his *right* to live by the profession, but

he did not become an apostle for the sake of living by it. No, he lived by his own hands, and refused wages which he might have received. He preached, laboured, did everything, for the honour of being an ambassador for Christ. And this is what every man who wishes to be a minister, ought to do. Don't you think so, Mr. Rechab?"

I knew very well the drift of his discourse and that he was wishing me to confess, that a curate should refuse a stipend even when offered it. I came, however, to beg his assistance in obtaining a title, and therefore thinking it imprudent to quarrel with him, I declined a direct reply.

"I think it wrong, exceedingly wicked, to seek ordination solely for what are called the loaves and fishes, and in that opinion I perfectly agree with you. You know, no doubt, Mr. Scrapling, that I am looking out for a title. I shall be obliged if you will have the goodness to assist me."

"Most gladly, Mr. Rechab, most gladly. I shall feel very great pleasure in furthering the

views of such a disinterested young man. You covet the honour of the profession, and, I am quite sure will be an honour to it. I have just been reading the ‘Christian Remembrancer,’—the ‘Christian Remembrancer?’ yes, that I believe it was—and I saw the following advertisement of a curacy which I think would just suit you: ‘Wanted immediately, a Curate for the Parish Church of Littlecome. He must be of evangelical principles. A title will be given if required. N.B. The Living may be sold and a title given to the purchaser. Letters postpaid.’ I have a friend, Mr. Rechab, a very pious, godly young friend, who is most anxious to make a purchase of this kind for himself, and I shall be glad if, when you apply for the curacy, you would have the goodness to inquire the value and price of the living.”

I expressed my acknowledgements to Mr. Scrapling as well as I knew how, and, though fully sensible of his selfishness, I was exceedingly grateful for his apparent kindness, apparent it was, God knew, though I knew not

then, and promised to do as he requested, and to let him know the result the moment I received a reply to my application, so anxious was I at that time from the distress of my family and my own previous disappointments to obtain some situation, especially in the church, which might remove me from Swallowbeck, where every eye knew and marked me. I particularly wished also to get away without an interview with Mr. De Witt, not because I just now gave credence to the report of his marriage, but because, on account even of the report itself—allowing it to be unfounded, I could not endure the sight of him, and, as for conversing with him, I did not think my tongue would be able to articulate a syllable. The sight of him would be as effectual a patch to my mouth as ever was laid on any mouth by Burkite or ghost.

For this reason, when I paid my present visit to Mr. Scrapling, I looked before me as far as the turning of streets or other intervening objects would permit, for the purpose of turning back or aside in order to avoid Mr. De Witt or any other objectionable person. In-

deed ever since my return from Oxford, I had on this account lived so retired, unseen, to all who called invisible, that my friends really thought I was quickly growing into a misanthrope, a Zimmerman, or a Timon. God knows, though naturally shy, I was always sociable with those I knew, but shame, a *mauvaise honte*, at present, made me shroud myself as much as possible from public gaze.

After having expressed my thanks to Mr. Scrapling with more warmth than politeness, I was now just retiring and congratulating myself on having hitherto escaped a rencontre with any obnoxious person, when a knock was heard at the front door. I know not how it happened that I took not the least notice of it, and consequently without the least expectation of such a thing, in going out of the drawing-room into the hall, whom should I thrust my head against but the redoubted Mr. De Witt himself. If you have ever read Virgil or Homer, you will remember the speechless horror with which a man draws back his steps, when he perceives that he is just treading

upon a large, fiery-eyed snake, in the grass. As I am alive this moment, I know not whether I stood on my head or my heels, was dead or alive, nor do I now recollect, nor have I ever been able to recollect, how I got out of the house into the open air, whether I spoke to the monster or did not, whether or not he vouchsafed a salutation.

How strange is all this, considering that he had been my preceptor in Greek and Latin, and those liberal arts, to have learned which is said to soften men's manners and suffer them not to be brutal or barbarous. I was told long afterwards, that after long ruminating, pondering, conjecturing, consulting, he could not, with all his perspicacity, and that of those he consulted, fathom the penetralia of the mystery. Some, thinking it otherwise unaccountable, expressed their opinion, but furtively, for the truth should not always be spoken—that I had, unfortunately, poor man, in consequence of disappointment and grief, poured in spirits which had effervesced and made me tumble or stumble, I forget which.

I reached home, however, as light as a feather, but whether I ran or walked, or flew or went on my legs, or in some other way, is one of those millions of events wrapped up in the impenetrable mist of by-gone time. But it is true I reached home, and when my head began to grow clear, after the chaos produced in it by my recent collision with the Rev. Mr. De Witt, I began to think of my prospects. The advertisement was in my mind a mathematical demonstration, proof as strong as holy writ, that the vicar was my friend. Had he favoured me only with his promises, I should, as soon as out of his sight, have blown them to the winds. I knew that he could make promises faster a deal than his cook could make pie-crusts, and for the same purpose; but facts, says a quack of his astonishing cures, are stubborn things.

So ignorant was I of the ways of the world, that I had no more doubt of getting this advertised curacy, than if my own father had been the rector and had already written and signed my nomination. I began to make all necessary preparations, as if about to be or-

dained in the course of a month or six weeks. I read over with all speed the routine books for deacon's orders, got bands made, and wondered whether I should not get a surplice, but after strict inquiry was informed that it was furnished by the parish. I copied out of the "Clerical Almanack," which I bought as part of my preparation, a *si quis* and testimonial to be ready for signature, and read the church service aloud to my brother, who extolled me to where some one was in the body or out of it, he could not tell which. I also copied sermons of every description from the cold, frozen, pagan-ethical of Blair, to the familiar, old-wife, warm twaddle of Cooper. I was sure of the title as soon as the letter should come from Dorsetshire, two or three hundred miles off, for there I presumed, from the address of A. B. C., Post-office, Stalbridge, that the beautiful curacy was situated.

After the lapse of a week, I began to think the reply of A. B. C. very dilatory; but comforted myself with the idea suggested by my brother, that the bishop's day for ordination

not being perhaps very near, he was not in an very great haste to answer, precipitation in that case being unnecessary. But at the end of a fortnight, and then of three weeks, and then of a month, I began to think, and really it was a wonder, an eighth great one of the world, I had never thought so before, that he was already provided. At the expiration of six weeks all hope from that quarter breathed its last, and I in good earnest commenced in consultation with my friends the excogitation of some other plan. But first it was decided that I should repeat my visit to the vicar and tell him plainly that I had now abandoned all expectations from that advertisement, and that I should ask him if he knew of any vacancy amongst his acquaintances.

“Oh, my dear Sir, never talk of it, never mind it. Very probably they had met with a curate prior to your application ; but it matters not, it is of no consequence, no consequence whatever, Mr. Rechab. I have another advertisement for you, from which I am sure you will obtain a curacy.”

Here he put into my hand one exactly similar to the former. The address was Z. Y., at some place near the Land's-End, at any rate it was in Cornwall, and it stated that a title would be given, but that, the living being small, the stipend would not be very considerable: at least it spoke to this effect, but I cannot call to mind, nor is it material, the exact phraseology. I accepted it with joy and thankfulness, and as eagerly as a drowning man catches at a reed, and returned home in nearly the same elevation of spirits as on the former occasion. Hope was relighted, and she shone again as long as the fuel lasted, which was about a month, for she expired sooner than before. I cannot, however, withhold from the reader's notice a little of the colloquy between us at this interview, not because it is intrinsically important, but because it will more perfectly characterize the person,

“What do you think, Mr. Rechab? I dare say your virtuous mind could not guess, if I were not to tell you. I received a letter from a young gentleman this very morning, offering me, Mr. Rechab, yes, offering me myself, a

hundred pounds, no less than a hundred pounds, for a title to my stipendiary curacy, and, in addition to the one hundred pounds, to serve me five years gratuitously."

"And do you approve of offering money for a title?"

"I told you, Mr. Rechab, before, I told you most positively that I reprobated the impiety, that I abhorred as damnable the simoniacal sin of purchasing ordination."

"But you have that letter to show of course, Mr. Scrapling?"

"Of course I have the letter, I have it in my writing-desk somewhere; but you know, Mr. Rechab, I can never think, never entertain for a moment the idea of exhibiting it. I would not, oh! no, no, no, I would not, Mr. Rechab, for the credit of the profession, and also, though that is not so much, and also for the sake of his relations. He is a respectable, a most highly respectable young gentleman, and of a very respectable family, and no doubt will have influence to obtain orders. I know very well, Mr. Rechab, exceedingly well, I am quite sure,

that, if I were to do my duty, I should immediately apprize the Bishop. Yes, I should immediately forward his letter to the Bishop; but there is his family, Mr. Rechab, there is his family, you know."

"But if you are unwilling to expose him, why do you tell me?"

"I tell you as a secret, but I do not tell you his name. No, Mr. Rechab, I mention no names."

This was very true, and I knew it before I asked the question, but it was my indirect way of asking the name; however, it is true, his scandal was anonymous, and doubtless there was a reason.

"But what do you think, Mr. Scrapling, of his offer to serve gratis? Do you think that is right?"

"Curacies are very difficult to be obtained, Mr. Rechab, exceedingly difficult, I never knew them so difficult. I cannot think what must become of the shoals of young men poured forth every year by the universities, and intended by their friends for the church."

“But what, I say, is your opinion of the proposal to serve for nothing? Is that correct, think you?”

“What a shocking thing, Mr. Rechab, what a most shocking thing indeed to offer a hundred pounds for a title! But they are so difficult to be obtained, are titles, that I do not wonder, I am not at all surprised, Mr. Rechab, that for the sake of one, people should do what is so very wrong.”

I thought it useless to repeat the question again, for that it could not elicit a direct answer. I therefore now rose to take my leave, which as soon as he observed, he invited me to walk out with him through the glebe behind the house. It seems our conversation had not been sufficiently extended to his liking, or been productive of the desired result. To his proposal I could not object, as the walk was in the direction of my father's house. We therefore made our exit from the drawing-room through a half-glass door into a very handsome lawn and rich pasture tastefully laid out and wooded, not extensive, but exhibiting in its arrangements

the very elegant taste of his predecessor, who was really a refined and most accomplished scholar and still more devout Christian minister.

We were scarcely on the terrace when we were joined by one of his children, an exceedingly pretty daughter, apparently about six years of age. Never did I see a face from which, in imagination, you would be more inclined to borrow your idea of an angel of light. Mr. Scrapling himself was an exceedingly fine-looking man, but it was the mother who had bequeathed to her child its celestial beauty. Her hair unrestrained fell over her shoulders in the greatest profusion, in richer exuberance than I thought I had ever seen or noticed before. It was of a light brown, so light as to be perfectly white with a slight discolouration, and the brightness, brilliancy of it bespoke that it was the hair of a creature in the early dawn of life.

“Well might Lucretia,” said I, “call her children her jewels,” but of Lucretia, Mr. Scrapling had never heard. “Well,” said I, “might

our Saviour say, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' ”

It was for their innocence, however, that he said so, whereas I was thinking of their personal beauty. I praised his child, and he seemed not *quite* insensible to the compliment, but if you wish to set his attention broad-awake and to bring every sense he has into the most violent, thrilling, maddening play, speak of money and of curatizing for nothing. The child ran to her curmudgeon of a father with the vivacity, the animation, the glee, which infantile blood alone can give. As we walked through the grounds and discoursed on weightier matters, she played around him, and prattled and laughed at nothing, and asked questions. At length, we came to a summer-house, having in front a verandah overgrown with woodbine and some evergreens, where in my childhood I had often been with the last good man, the preceding vicar, now in heaven if ever man went thither. It was here where he used sometimes during summer to catechise the children of the parish. Said I,

“Mr. Scrapling, this is a spot dear to me,

and, I believe, to almost every one of my age who has spent his or her life in the parish. I have answered many a question here to your predecessor now in heaven. When I was about the age of that fascinating child of your's, I remember his asking me once in this very place, 'why do you love God?' I answered with a loud voice and great rapidity, 'because he loves me,' and he was so pleased that he caught me round the neck and kissed me as if I had been his own child. If Mr. St. John were alive, how he would rejoice, Mr. Scrapling, at my desire and intention to be a clergyman! I should not long want a title."

This I said, not by way of urging him to assist me: it came naturally and spontaneously from the heart in consequence of the association which the locality produced.

"I warrant you, Mr. Rechab, I have no doubt whatever, my dear Sir, that you will soon succeed. You have a proper notion of the dignity and honour of the profession. You covet, Sir, you covet the honour, and have no regard in the matter for filthy lucre."

The sky was now very dark in some portion

of the heavens, and there was a most luminous brightness in another.

We were under the dome of the alcove, the foliage of which effectually protected us from the large, solitary, rattling drops, which now began to fall. They were few but large as marbles. The black part of the heavens above and behind, and indeed before us, with the exception of two or three fissures in the dense darkness through which the light behind burst out, was so exceedingly pitchy, that it reminded me of utter blindness. The thunder began to mutter, as if there had been some heavy artillery playing at a great but still audible distance. The appearance of the heavens interrupted for a minute or two the current of our discourse, which was running just then very rapidly and torrent-like, and also like a flood somewhat muddy. The large drops, however, ceased, and the luminous breaks in the ether seemed to enlarge a little and to pour forth a broader sheet of vivid light, though the blackness elsewhere remained as deep, if not deeper by the foil set by the bright portion. The child was

prattling and playing with the honeysuckle flowers, when we resumed the thread of our confabulation.

“Yes, Mr. Rechab, you are worthy the ministerial office: you deserve, most richly deserve to be a preacher of the ever blessed Gospel. You are not for, Mr. Rechab, you regard not, you despise the paltry hire, for which the hireling and not the shepherd labours. Always continue to do so. Always despise it. Never work for the Lord for money.”

The words were scarcely outside his lips, when a clap of thunder burst over our heads with a crash as if the whole vault of the heavens above us had been by an omnipotent grasp crushed together, and a flash of lightning simultaneously as it seemed with the report, wrapped the place where we stood as if in a momentary blaze. The beautiful, innocent, playful child was struck to the earth. I saw her beautiful tresses woven by the graces singed to her bare head which lay upon her father's foot, with one eye rolled out of the socket and lying upon her cheek, and the whole face

scorched and black and shrivelled. The destruction was the work of an instant—as quick as lightning, the common-place comparison—quick as creation. “Let there be light, and there was light.”

“Oh God, my child,” exclaimed the unhappy father, while I mechanically took to my legs, but did not know for what. It was not fear, it was not horror, though horror there was and to spare. But when I had sped over some fifty yards, I conceived in an instant an errand for my flight, and for aught I know I may have started on that errand, I ran for a surgeon. As I ran with more haste than speed, as all do who make too great haste, I could not refrain from saying to myself, “Surely the thunder was aimed at the guilty and hit the innocent. Great God, whose way is in the deep, and path in the great waters, what had that innocent, lovely cherub done? But it was too lovely to be here, too sweet a flower not to be soon transplanted to Paradise.”

A surgeon of undoubted abilities sped on the wings of love and hope, but the soul had

quitted its frail tenement of clay, lately so beautiful ; but now, such as it is no one could recognize, and was already with its myriads of sisters in the bosom of Abraham. I will not attempt to describe the distress at the vicarage, nor did I wait long to be a witness of it. My presence was useless, and I never was clever at administering balm to the incurable wounds of an afflicted mind. After seeing then the insufficiency of all earthly aid, I repaired to my own home.

There I took up my pen to write an application for the curacy, about which I had the advertisement in my pocket. As some compensation for the disadvantage of being personally unknown to the parties, I gave a great number of references for character, conduct, and religious opinions: the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Lineage, the Rev. Mr. De Witt, John Recorder, Esq., Christopher Jackson, Esq., and a long list of others, who being unknown to the reader need not be named. I also as before built castles in the air, and entertained no doubt that my application, this at any rate, with so long a

beadroll of most respectable referees, would be successful: so inexhaustible is the fountain of hope.

But the well of hope was dry again at the expiration of a month, and I now despaired of ever receiving anything but expectations, food for hope but none for the body, from the worthy vicar of Swallowbeck, that most disinterested prelate, who would work in the vineyard for the honour and despise the denarius a day. But what was to be done now? should I sit down in despair? God forbid, so long as there was a head to scheme and foot to trot. Necessity is the mother of invention, so says the true proverb. When Alexander could not untie the gordian knot, he cut it with his sword. But what next? What says necessity? "Apply to the tutors of your college," said my father; "they must know what you are fit for, and must often hear of curacies and scholastic appointments."

His words would have been gospel, an infallible oracle, had I gone to any other college; but as it was, they were a romance or novel,

every fact of which has been spawned and hatched in the poet's imagination while his eye has been rolling in fine frenzy. The Rev. Mr. Hireton, however, I began to reflect, had done me an injury for which it would be difficult for him, had he the desire, to make me full reparation, and I also began to think and cogitate, and infer and syllogize, and conclude, that he might have some very salutary compunctious visitings and be willing to strike a bargain with his conscience, that if it would only be quiet and let him alone without obliging him to disgorge the fee and make restitution, he would help me to a curacy or some other situation. I therefore wrote to him, and also at the same time to his brother tutor, a little black-faced twaddling old wife, who rejoiced in the clack of his own clapper, and would speak you fair while he did you an injury. I never received an answer from Mr. Hireton; some years after, I was informed that he was at that time *non compos*. The other wrote to say, that he knew of no situation scholastic or in the church, and that he should always be most happy to hear of

my welfare, prosperity, and happiness through life, which he begged me to believe that he most devoutly wished. Said I to myself on the receipt of this most uncharitable epistle, "if ever it should please God to lay a dispensation on me to preach the Gospel, my first text shall be : ' If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled ; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are necessary to the body ; what doth it profit ? ' "

CHAPTER VII.

ABOUT this time an old neighbour and acquaintance of my father's called at our house, who was an everlasting snuff-taker. His finger and thumb were scarcely ever out of the box, his pocket-handkerchief was for ever vibrating between his pocket and nose like the pendulum of a clock, that is, as regularly and invariably, with this advantage over the time-piece, that the pocket-handkerchief was a never ceasing pendulum, a sort of perpetual motion, for he took snuff and wiped his olfactory member even in bed, and some said while asleep as well as throughout the day, whereas a clock requires to be wound up.

The snuff he so largely partook of was called Prince's mixture. I thought it incredible that any man could or would contract such a servile and invincible liking for this apparent gratification ; but man learns and lives, or lives and learns. He offered me a pinch : it was politeness, the civility, the etiquette of a fine gentleman. He presents his box to you with a grace : there is a gentlemanly way of holding the box while your friend introduces the requisite members, and of giving him the box with a genteel nonchalance while you look another way. How much of the gentleman is displayed in the extraction of the handkerchief ! in folding it afresh after expurgation ! in shaking the recipient member while you introduce, that is, make to ascend the titillating mixture !

He offered me a pinch, and, for the first time in my life I took one. I had always held the practice in abhorrence, and therefore should have remembered, and indeed I did, the pithy advice, *obsta principiis* ; but I had heard some one say that it was a most powerful exhilarator, cheering as a glass without the causticity of

spirits. God knows my spirits were at this time down at zero, and anything which could raise them, though artificial and unnatural, was not to be rejected with scorn. I took a pinch of Prince's mixture, and heartily commended its soothing, sedative, comforting efficacy. I went immediately and made a purchase, for I had already passed the Rubicon, a purchase of an ounce of Prince's mixture and a box to be its receptacle. Perhaps never man in the whole world became a determined, regular, persevering snuff-taker so instantly. Juvenal says *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*, but there are exceptions to all general rules. Nemo is not true: it is an universal proposition in contingent matter, which is never true; so a logician would say. But though I turned snuff-taker, you may say, all at once, yet I was not a confirmed one all at once: in process of time I could and did take it oftener and in greater quantities. No doubt I improved, but I doubt whether I ever had my digitals oftener in the receptacle than on the day I commenced. Behold me then much out of the house with a

snuff-box in my pocket and a yellow handkerchief as a suitable appendage.

The snuff was, I grant, a stimulant, and fought most bravely against my mental depression, for depressed I was at the gloomy prospect before me of inextricable difficulties in which I found myself enveloped. I was so completely hemmed in, so perfect and endless were the mazes of the labyrinth in which I was placed, that despair began to take full possession and occupation of my soul. Like Dædalus, I had made the labyrinth for myself, for I might have done better at Oxford if I had exercised sufficient ingenuity and spirit. Why did I suffer that malignant Hartley to acquire such an ascendancy over me? Why did I not take a brush and dust Mr. Hireton's face? But though, like Dædalus, I had made the labyrinth myself and for myself, I began to think it utterly impossible to thread my way, or in any manner get out of it, unless I could, like that ingenious artist, make myself a pair of wings and take my flight into the air.

One day during one of these melancholy

moods of *ennui* and despair, I determined to stroll out into the fields, where solitude, I thought, might assist my thoughts in their efforts to discover what ought to be done. Again I wandered near the residence of Jane, or rather within sight of it, though not in the direction described in a preceding chapter. I came to the brook which wound its way along the valley, and sat down on a knoll whence I had a full view of a picturesque farm-house. The house of Jane's father was not now visible. This beautiful house stood about half a mile from the brook, on the side of the hill which towered very high above it. A field of wheat lay beyond it and now wore a very rich and golden appearance. Higher up and to the eminence as far as the eye could follow, was a dense wood of beeches, firs, and royal oaks of old England, all stately, sublime, majestic in stature, and venerable in age. The oaks spread their broad, expansive, ample arms, as if indicative of their protective power over the land when created into the wooden walls of old England.

The back ground of the finest oaks, the

strength and glory of the British empire, and the gifts of Ceres undulating in the breeze would have made any house a pretty picture; but, independently of these ornaments, the house itself would have made a beautiful sketch of a rural abode, from that irregularity in its construction and relative arrangements which is the soul of the picturesque. It consisted of two wings very unequal in dimensions and dissimilar in style, and from the centre projected a respectable structure of Gothic architecture with, though the edifice was old and in some places dilapidated, dripstones resting upon grotesque heads. To one side of this central part was attached a porch so large as to be very disproportioned to the general size of the dwelling, having a doorway with a pointed arch, a loop-hole above, and on the pediment what appeared to be and really was—a small sun dial.

Woodland House, as it was called, was surrounded with trees of very large dimensions, though not so thick but that the general structure of the whole could be discerned. The blue smoke curling so beautifully above the trees

might have suggested the well known song. Behind there were a farm and other agricultural buildings, forming altogether a farmery on a very large scale. The house, woods, and land for miles round were the property of Jane's father. Half a mile below the house wandered the brook, on whose margin I was now strolling and ruminating, as I had done thousands of times before when "a schoolboy wandering in the wood to pluck the primrose gay." I knew every path, nook and turn about the premises.

A mile beyond the house, a wooden bridge led to a road meant for carts and carriages of any description, though seldom disturbed in its silence and solitude by any such heavy, noisy vehicles. The road went through the wood behind the house and the fields beyond it, and round by the front again to the brook. It was neither more nor less than what they call an occupation road. On this I purposed to go in my solitary ramble, the seclusion according at the period with my melancholy mood. But about a quarter of a mile on this side of the bridge I met with a young female of dark but

uncommonly handsome complexion and features, leading by the hand an old blind fiddler. He carried his violin under his arm, but, as they approached me, he began to tune it and prepare to play, judging from my appearance as I suppose the female did, that I might be fiddled out of a few pence. While he supported with the instrument, she burst forth into the following ballad, with a voice and expression which I could not but think belied the poverty of her outward appearance.

“ Oh, who can bear the sting that cleaves,
Close ever to the heart ?
The sting that love, so fickle, leaves
Within the vital part.

“ And oh, thou young and handsome, love
Has fed thee long with hope :
That hope lies shivered, now then rove
A melancholy mope.

“ Deep as thy grief is, deeper still,
Far deeper thou shalt see.
Venus has stung, but Bacchus will
A fiercer viper be.

“Thy name, now white as lily fair,
A nameless name will be ;
An enemy will strip thee bare,
Then, then I'll come to thee.

“Then, then the gipsy girl, though poor,
A houseless, helpless child,
Will be a faithful friend and sure,
When thou shalt be reviled.

“But thou wilt turn to paths of peace,
Abhor the god of wine,
And Heaven will give a richer fleece,
And thou wilt not repine.

“Thy lady-love, now lost, deplored,
Dead as may seem her love,
In person as in heart restored,
Shall be thy pairing dove.

“Oh! when thou art thyself once more,
And brighter days shalt see,
And when thy cup of bliss runs o'er,
Think of the blind and me.”

These gipsies pretend to be fortune-tellers.
Was this an impromptu? There was something so melancholy and prophetically mysterious in this little air, that I ardently wished I had

bestowed my charity without being thus melodiously invited. Low as were my spirits, they were sunk by it lower and lower still, until my snuff-box I found in absolute request to save me from the deepest horrors of despair. I could not but think her song a part of her own history, that it had been composed to the tune of her own sorrows, and that it soon might be the song of mine. I put a shilling into the old man's hand, for which they both seemed exceedingly grateful, and soon after I entered the wood.

“ Black melancholy sits, and round her throws,
A death-like silence, and a dread repose :
Her gloomy presence saddens every scene,
Shades every flow'r, and darkens every green,
Deepens the murmurs of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror o'er the woods.”

These lines occurred to my recollection as peculiarly applicable to my then condition and state of mind, as I stole slowly and, save from the brawling brooks, silently and alone up the solitary road, which was overshadowed and

sometimes very dark, and so circuitous that it was impossible to see any one approaching until he was within distance for salutation. As I struggled upwards towards the summit and had nearly gained it, I reflected without any assignable cause on the folly of making oneself miserable, whether external circumstances justified such wretchedness or not. What an inexhaustible mine of unhappiness is a man's own imagination ! Let fortune confer her choicest gifts ever so lavishly, yet can the alchemy of imagination transmute them into the very elixir of woe and sadness.

“ O happiness, our being's end and aim,
Good, pleasure, ease, content, whate'er thy name,
That something still, which prompts th' eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die ;
Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool and wise.”

“ Who shall tell,” said I to myself, “ wherein it consists ? What is its essence ? It dwells in the bosom of the poor, the poorest, the blind, the halt, the maimed, the Lazarus full of sores,

and often flees with abhorrence the table of Dives. I will be happy, happy in despite of the world, its frowns, its glozing lies. I will this moment and henceforth for ever cast wretchedness from me as a filthy rag, a worn-out garment. I will clothe myself in the glorious garment of hope, resignation, contentment."

And now as I emerged from under the sombre canopy of the trees into the open sunshine, I felt as if I had got rid of the nightmare, as if an insupportable burden had been lifted off my soul and had left me more light and cheerful. I inhaled the breeze of the hills which came perfumed with the fragrance of summer's bouquet, and could not refrain from clasping my hands, casting my eyes to heaven, and exclaiming audibly, "Blessed be God, I am happy!"

And who should stand before me or rather be just passing, but my own, my all, my Jane, my first and last, and the Rev. Mr. De Witt, her reputed suitor! "If facts can speak," thought I, "and can be relied upon, this walking together *solus cum sold* should proclaim, with a voice as

loud and true as Jehovah's from Mount Sinai, that he is her accepted lover, (God forgive me for the horrible blasphemy) ; her suitor and in a fair way of conducting her to the altar at no distant period. Probably, reader, you will think, that they were a basilisk to my eyes, that they blasted my eyesight, my precious sight worth worlds of worlds, my heart, my soul, that I was dead. Bless your life, no such thing. I was never more cool in my life. I might have been in a cold bath. Might have been at the North pole, embalmed in an iceberg to to be kept free from taint or corruption thirty thousand years.

What a wonderful thing is the heart of man! A reed may break it, when the sight of hell could not disturb it. Oh God! I am indeed fearfully and wonderfully made, the Bible is true, the word of God. We both made a pause full in each other's face. I never was more myself. There was no palpitation, no trepidation, no sigh, no inarticulate, imperfect expression. I stood as firm as a rock, as the everlasting hills which can never be moved, at least without the fulcrum of Archimedes. I

was not fierce, I was not calm. My mind did not play the truant and run. No, my soul, the whole and every part of it was collected into one solid, immoveable Macedonian phalanx.

This thorough immobility of muscle did not, however, continue long, though, during the interview, it suffered no serious throw from its centre of gravity. I observed that she was pale, and that her pallor was the effect of mental more than of corporeal sickness. She was not happy, that was certain. Considering how I loved her, can it be wondered at if I was sorry? if the sight of her wan face, shrunk, but in sickness beautiful and fascinating, ruffled the smooth mirror-like surface of my soul? No; there was a ripple. We exchanged compliments about health, weather, the season, nothing, anything; but there was a melancholy, heart-broken expression in that mirror of the heart, pale as it was, which told me more plainly than language ever told, or ever will even in heaven, that she was unhappy, that I was the cause; that I could relieve her, and that she expected it from me. All this, I say, was legible in her

countenance, especially when she looked back as we parted.

I have ever since regretted, I almost think without the interruption of an hour, at least during my waking moments, that I did not return with them, prolong our conversation, and thus make a sort of voyage of discovery. I might probably have learned her mind, a piece of learning which would have saved me a world of grief, a life of much sin, and, need I add, sorrow. We parted, however, on my part very cavalierly. Oh! that stubbornness of heart, that unbending, unyielding temper, which holds reason cheap and plays the fool. I proceeded home at a quicker pace and made no detour for the purpose of lengthening a walk which had already been long enough.

My brother still stoutly maintained the utter impossibility of believing, that she would consent, or her friends wish her to become the wife of Mr. De Witt. There was such a prodigious disparity in everything as must forbid the banns. Again, I could not but acquiesce in the justice of what he said. Reason was on

his side at all events. So soon, therefore, after parting with them, I thought their union as unlikely as that of a mantiger with a beautiful lady. Again then I was consoled and composed, and I now directed my thoughts to the means of obtaining a situation.

It was determined that I should advertise in some one or more of the newspapers. I did so thrice in a Liverpool paper, and the same number of times in one published at York. Each was a failure: no application was made. The expense was two guineas, not to mention that of postage. The money went, never of course found its way back, and brought no employment. How was it ever likely? If a curacy was anywhere at liberty or promising to be so within half-a-dozen years, the incumbent's house was besieged by personal applicants, numbers known and ready to pray with the lips, and hammer over a copied sermon a twelvemonth gratis. How then could an advertisement succeed? And yet a curacy has been obtained in that way. Well, the whole was to me a mystery, and I thought the best mail

a man in my situation could put on was patience.

“Something,” said I, “will turn up by and bye. When things are at the worst they begin to mend. It is surprising what a run of bad luck you may have at cards one evening, and what an excellent one the next. The world is a lottery : almost everything a man undertakes is a speculation. His business in the course of a twelvemonth may place him in independence and affluence, or in the gazette. Everything apparently is a venture at sea. Though I hold gambling in abhorrence, and should hate the sight of money I had so won as if I had stolen it, I yet think it might be defended to a mathematical demonstration, on the score of its being no more a spec than most men’s trades and professions.”

Thus I said and spoke at the time, placing the providence of God out of the question. Disappointment and distress often cause a man to express sentiments, which, in his dispassionate moments he is far from entertaining.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY most excellent and amiable brother fell sick on the evening of the day I met Jane. His complaint was the cholera, not Asiatic, that desolating and all-devouring pestilence, for it had not yet paid this island a visit and frightened it from its propriety, but what is commonly called the English. We called in a surgeon without delay, and yet, he said, a half hour's delay would certainly have been fatal, so near was the monster gorging his prey. An inflammation was every moment apprehended, and the Esculapius we consulted made frequent inquiries with a view to ascertain if such had taken place.

I had always loved my brother with as ardent an affection as one brother ever felt for another, and I had every reason to do so. If I had not loved him, I must have been a monster, a *lusus naturæ*, a tithe of a rational creature, not the man of sound and perfect understanding capable of appreciating the virtue, the amiableness, the excellence of such a brother. He was too good for this world, a conviction of which very much increased my anxiety and fear for him while he was ill. I never went to bed ; what would have been the use of it ? But towards morning he became much better, and strong hopes of his recovery were inspired and entertained.

I recovered my spirits, and though nature had not received her requisite and wonted refreshment during the night, seemed to myself in the morning to possess a more than every day share. The reason was, perhaps, that the excitement of the night being something unusual had compelled my mind to abandon for a time the objects about which it had employed itself, and to busy itself about something of more urgent import-

ance. Be this as it may, I felt unusually hilarious, and, now that my brother was out of danger, though far from well, I laughed and talked in my pleasantest mood, just as when I had not felt the stroke of disappointment and the vista of life was pictured by hope as nothing but delightful.

With this vivacity and glee I was conversing with my brother about some bagatelle which has since slipped my memory, when about half-past eight o'clock the bells of the parish church commenced a merry peal. "Who," said I, "has been noozed this morning?" For a marriage I presumed it was, that so early set the bells a ringing. It is singular that, even through association of ideas, had fear not brought it to my recollection, the nuptials of my old pedagogue would not at this moment have crossed my mind; but neither by association nor fear nor any other circumstance did I for an instant think of that dreadful event. I went to the window, and, as I stood there, continued speaking to my brother, who made no reply.

After speaking a considerable time and having the conversation wholly to myself, and listening to the exhilarating peal of the bells, for I had always admired the tone of our parish bells, I went to my brother with some apprehension that his silence proceeded from a return of his complaint. No sooner did I fix my eyes upon his face, than the idea like lightning flashed into my mind, for whom this matrimonial peal so early saluted the valley of Swallowbeck, and was so cheerily responded to by echo in her retreats. He had suspected the truth the moment the bells saluted his ears, but was afraid to give me alarm which might afterwards turn out unfounded. His look, however, betrayed his opinion, and the instant it caught my eye, the truth flashed on my mind as instantaneously as it had on his at the sound of the bells. The peal had been the telegraph to him, and his countenance forwarded the intelligence to me.

“Is that Mr. De Witt’s marriage?” said I, the moment I saw him, as if my tongue had been the spokesman to his mind.

He was evidently afraid to venture an answer and speak what he thought, and he merely observed, "Oh, no, it does not follow: the bells ring often enough in a large populous parish like this."

He affected to disregard it and made one or two irrelevant observations, but as I looked wistfully out of the window, appearing to take no notice, I observed him steal out of the room as if casually and on no particular errand. I knew the object of his movement: he was gone to make inquiry. I listened at the room-door and heard him send the servant to ask what the bells were ringing for. She soon returned in breathless haste,

"For Mr. De Witt's marriage, the crazy schoolmaster."

"To whom is he married?"

"To the beautiful Miss Jane Seymour, Sir. Who would have thought it, Sir? He is so ugly and old, and cracked besides, I am sure she wanted a husband badly. I would not have had him myself."

Thus the girl was running on, when my ears

were beyond the reach of her voice. I had taken up my hat in the lobby, and gone out at the front door. I walked with that rapidity, which I had before considered a conclusive demonstration of Mr. De Witt's insanity, and certainly found it a relief to the maddening turbulence of my mind. I do not wonder at madmen walking so fast, so long and so incessantly, as would kill others from sheer exertion. I walked at that rate for months, occasionally for years, and, if I was not mad, I shall always think that this violent exertion and exercise of the body prevented the deposition or destruction of my reason. I bent my way as usual down the valley: it was retired and had been my haunt and the scene of my celestial reveries, ever since the accursed god, for the heathens deified the passion, first kindled the flame which has ever since devoured me.

I had not paced over a quarter of a mile from home, before I overtook on the banks of the brook, a labourer whom I had long known and been accustomed to exchange a word with. It is strange that though there was no room for

doubt, I could not but observe a doubt spring up in my mind, that after all the report might be only one of the many thousand lies of fame : said I,

“James, what are they ringing for so merrily and so soon?”

“For the schoolmaster’s wedding, Sir.”

“Are you sure of that, James?”

“Oh yes, your honour, I seed them myself. The schoolmaster held his head up as if he had been going to fall on his back, and she held her’s as much t’other way. There was a scramble, your honour, and I got a sixpence, and had like to have gotten half-a-crown.”

And he was going on, what more he would have said I know not ; he was not a messenger of glad tidings. I passed him, left him behind me with the strides of a maniac, of Mr. De Witt himself. “Too well, too well, thou tellest a tale so ill.”

I plunged into the most secluded haunts of the vale and the woods, to escape from myself, my mind, my soul, my thoughts, for that seemed my object or what I strove at, though I

never formed any such purpose ; but ever and anon in some dell or through some avenue of the woods, echo telegraphed to my ears the merry peal of the espoused, shall I say the blessed ? and it rang through my brains, and even, when out of echo's reach or way, still was there the swinging in my brain. Alas ! those church-going bells, how often had I listened to and admired them on a Sunday, when they invited me to God's house ! but now they rang, not an invitation, or call, or summons to church, but a knell to my peace, and made even the worship of God no longer a pleasure. I could not bear to see the altar before which she had knelt.

Oh, God, did she kneel to plight her troth there in the name of the triune God ? Mysterious vow : but she made it, or did she only feign or equivocate in some way I knew not, like some I have heard of who to avoid perjury and get off with a bare lie have kissed their thumb instead of the Book ? No, I could not bear to see the communion-rails again : I should lose my sight ; my eyes could never perform

their office again: reminiscence itself almost blasts them.

“ But Heaven hath a hand in these events,
To whose high will we bound our calm contents.”

Should do so no doubt, but do we? Did I then? Anything but that. The spirit within me lashed me to exertion, and there was no David's harp to soothe and compose me. As I descended the hill again for the hundredth time that day, I exclaimed, “ Oh ! I could weep my spirit from mine eyes.” But spirit it must have been : no gross, material liquid, such as some fools have gathered and saved in lacrymatories, descended from my eyes and traced its course along my cheek. No, I could shed no tears. In all my grief, broken-hearted, super-mortal, for the loss of Jane, I never could shed a tear. It was a grief too sacred, too refined, too ethereal, to vent itself in ordinary lacrymation, and if tears I did shed, they must have been of a spiritual essence, such as angels, if ever they weep, shed in heaven.

I traversed the fields, the places I had so

often paced in my reveries on her, over and over again on this day, and was surprised, considering the length of time and rapidity I thus exercised my body, that I should feel no lassitude, much less be obliged to take some rest. I repaired again and again to the road through the wood where I had seen them the day before, and lingered by the spot as if waiting for their reappearance, and as if I could have seen their spirits and conversed with them and told them freely my mind. And to their spirits supposed present, though invisible, I did address myself in all the vehemence of passion, enthusiasm, raving madness, in curses loud and deep, until for a moment recollecting myself, I was shocked at my desperate impiety and folly. I execrated my folly for not having embraced the opportunity which that interview presented. I might have learned the truth and prevented the catastrophe, and my folly in that instance I have always condemned and always shall.

Then again a momentary consolation flitted athwart my mind, "he is old, he may soon die," but it was only momentary ; reason, the little

left, common sense if I had a bit, replied in the words of Young, "all men think all men mortal but themselves." I can think of his death, but not of my own. I may die before him. Though old for her, he is not an old man. But nevertheless, I endeavoured with all my might, with reason or against her, to console and reanimate my almost extinct heart with this reflection and glimmering of a wicked hope.

I endeavoured also still to cherish the belief and really did entertain it, that they were not married. It is a most extraordinary thing, but never did this belief all this time wholly leave me. Notwithstanding the strongest possible evidence, leaving not the smallest twig to hang a doubt upon, this belief still hovered about my heart, and kept the warmth of it from being completely extinguished.

Thus then deriving comfort, I began to return home, and it was indeed high time. I had been rambling or rather galloping up and down the fields and the woods ever since morning, the fatal half-past eight o'clock, and the shades of evening began now to curtain the face of

nature. The woods grew darker and more dismal, the flowers closed their petals for their nocturnal slumber, and homeward the weary labourer plodded his way, and was leaving the world to darkness and to me. I therefore made the best of my way home, and met by the way more than one emissary from my friends, who had been despatched to look for me and bring me back. I found my father, mother, and brother in great distress, the two latter especially, because they knew more of my unfortunate attachment, though not more, for they had not been as close and lynx-eyed observers of my temper.

CHAPTER IX.

THEY were, as they expressed themselves, very much concerned at my appearance. I had taken no food all day, and when invited to eat was then first reminded that such had been the case. I was as haggard in countenance as if I had been ill for days, my eye wandered between cognizance of its object and mental abstraction, as if it could not fix directly upon its object, and I was so unsettled that I could not sit still but found relief in perpetual variation of posture.

But I now began to be surprisingly more composed: the hurricane for the present had blown over and been followed by a considerable

though not perfect calm. There was still a slight ripple on the waters, lately so troubled and rolling mountains high. I hoped, I believed they were not married, I had been mistaken, misinformed, the thing was impossible ; yet was I afraid to make inquiry, which might again call forth the hurricane that was passed. I did my utmost to be calm, composed, quiet, comfortable in myself, to myself, and to others ; but was like a child which has been most severely beaten, and, long after the punishment is over, and notwithstanding caresses and endearments and endeavours to soothe and make it forget, sobs and heaves convulsively. Thus it was with me.

The best of relatives did all that affection could suggest to tranquillise and comfort me, and for their sake I did my utmost in co-operation with their efforts. I succeeded more than a few hours before could have been thought possible. But I could not eat, at least just then, it was impossible, my throat was so contracted that my gorge rose at the thought of food. I was obliged to tell them a falsehood, and say that I

had obtained refreshment, and I begged them for a short time at least to allow me a respite from their importunities. My father retired to repose, and, so far as sickness would permit, found in sleep that steeping of the senses in forgetfulness, that sweet, refreshing oblivion of grief and care and anxiety, which innocence, virtue, piety like his alone can give.

“I have heard old Hannah Glead say,” my mother remarked, “that nothing so much soothed and comforted her as a pipe of tobacco, and that, whatever were her griefs, she could blow them all away in the smoke of her pipe. If I were you, my dear, I would learn to smoke. You can give it over, as soon as you are comfortable, and your uneasiness is gone.”

At their persuasion I would have consented to anything, no matter what or how much my abhorrence. I was like a schoolboy who has been beaten into a thorough submission; who descends from his altitudes and is humble enough to lick the dust.

“Yes,” said I, “I will smoke, do anything.”

I did not like the idea of its well known effects on the teeth, of which I had a most beautiful set ; as to its effects on the complexion, constitution and general health and strength, I was then a novice. They immediately set themselves to work to procure a pipe and some tobacco. Would that they had liked them as little or hated them as much as King James did, when he wrote his "Counterblast." They disappeared for a short time, and again left me to my greatest enemy, myself and my own reflections.

My mother returned with the poisonous plant. Little did she know the mischief she was preparing ; that she was unconsciously acting the part of an ancient sorceress, gathering herbs by the light of the moon for the destruction of a step-child, or an old useless husband. We could not foresee the consequences. That evening on which they tendered to me, poor ignorant creatures, the noxious murderous weed, I shall always regard as one of those unfortunate nights, which I could wish obliterated from the calendar of time. "Let the

day perish," said Job, " wherein I was born." Let the evening perish, say I, on which I smoked the first pipe.

It was undoubtedly one principal cause of my subsequent life of intemperance. I do not say that I and the jolly god should certainly have never shaken hands and become boon companions. My misfortune, some small portion of which I have already detailed, might, independently of every other thing or person, have introduced me to the society of Bacchus. Nor, in saying so, is it my wish or intention to palliate or defend my future career by the misfortunes which were my trials or temptations, against which man came into the world on purpose to wage war and fight to the death. But numbers have maintained and will, that man is in a great measure the creature of circumstances. It is easy, they say, for some Pharisaical, methodistical saint to cry out, " I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers," when the truth is, extortion, injustice, or dishonesty in any shape never was the vice to which by con-

stitution, education, or opportunity he was ever tempted.

If one gudgeon has been caught with a bait, let not another, which never had a bait offered it, glory over it and call it a fool. Man is, they maintain, so universally and all but without fail what circumstances make him, exactly and nothing else, that in ninety-nine instances out of every hundred, some say without a solitary exception, he but enacts the part which constitution or fortune, or both, the managers of this great theatre, puts into his hands to perform, verifying to the letter the truism of our peerless dramatist, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women only players; they have their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages."

I repeat, it was an event in my life much to be lamented, when I had the pipe and tobacco laid before me. It led to drunkenness, or, if it did not lead to it, yet by its fraternal affection for it and constant association with it, it made that vice, when its yoke was fairly put on, ten thousand times more difficult to be shaken off.

When a man is a drunkard and a smoker too, and too often they are twin brothers, born together and bred together, it is in my opinion, and I think myself a judge, having been an experimentalist for some years, next to an impossibility to cease to be the former unless you first cease to be the latter. Take my word for it, a smoking drunkard must pioneer the way to sobriety by a most determined, persevering abjuration of the pipe and its negative gratification. I speak from experience. I could never have abandoned intemperance, if I had not first renounced smoking.

But, unless great care and precaution be used, it also leads to drunkenness. You cannot smoke much, which a sedentary man especially in process of time is sure to do, without wishing to drink something. The dryness in the mouth and throat demand some gargle, and the liquid causes you to smoke more and with greater pleasure. You may drink water, but few will do that who can afford to drink something better

The event of this evening was a great misfortune, but the call for it was so urgent, that I

know not if some would not call it the less of two evils. So tremendous was the effect of recent events and of the last above all, that I am not sure the loss of reason, called in a verdict temporary insanity, would not have been the consequence, or whether, when on the brink of mental aberration, I should not have sought a termination to my sea of troubles in a voluntary deposition of life. And no doubt there is, that I did think suicide the less of two evils, had there not been an hereafter. But said I to myself,

“To be or not to be ? That’s the question,
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing, end them ?”

And as a proof that my reason was not so warped, that her eyes were not so twisted awry, did not so squint, as to be unable to look straight forward, and that she could form a correct judgment, I mention it as a creditable circumstance to myself, that she came to the

conclusion it was better for the mind to suffer, until a natural and unavoidable paralysis of her powers should plunge her in a Lethe of all care and sorrows.

But whether it was a misfortune or something to be commended, I smoked a pipe that evening. Mind it was a pipe, not a cigar, the usual appendage to every monkey's mouth in the streets, the quintessence of a macaroni. No, it was a pipe of very respectable longitude, becoming the dignity of a sage and venerable graybeard, and the tobacco was none of your feeble material. I filled my pipe as full as it could hold, and puffed away as if I had been at it ever since I was two feet high, and numbers of boys no higher may be seen in these degenerate days enjoying the reveries which nothing but a pipe can awaken.

I had not rolled the beautifully curling and odoriferous vapour out of my mouth above two minutes, before I thought it the most effectual and delightful murderer of care, that it ever entered into the heart of man to invent or devise, I was in heaven, in a trance, in an

ecstasy, in a vision of glory, Said I to myself, "I will smoke to all eternity. What care I for teeth? What is beauty to me, or what has it done for me? Man wants happiness, every man seeks for it, and I have found it. I will never be miserable again." I smiled and said, "I was comfortable." My poor mother and brother were happy too, my smiles found a reflection in their countenances. My happiness was their's. And I smoked forwards and cared for nothing and for nobody. "Yes," said I, "I will always be a smoker. The pipe shall be my companion in my solitary hours, and I will never again be visible to Jane or her odious family. With this delightful associate, this solace under all sorrow, this panacea for all affliction, I will immure myself in my room, I will never be seen until I can obtain some post far, far from hence. Yes, I will smoke for ever."

And the pipe fell from my hand and my mouth, and lay upon the carpet, its head severed from the trunk, and they hastened to take up the burning head, the little paltry stinking furnace, lest it should turn incendiary and fire the house. My

face was blanched as linen hung out to the sun for a summer, my eye became a dull, lacklustre, albuginous ball, and my head, like a poppy struck by a switch on the neck but not decapitated, drooped on my shoulders as if too heavy for my power to support it. I began too, to fall from the chair, and there was no small alarm and trepidation and running to and fro and sprinkling of water on my sallow face, accompanied by female shrieks.

I was sick, and verily so sick, so painfully sick, as I had never experienced before. I have heard of sea-sickness producing a wish that the ship would sink. I never was sea-sick, but I have been tobacco-sick, and had I my choice this moment, I should prefer sea-sickness as much the less of two evils.

I was blind, tobacco drunk ; everything went round with the rapidity of a tornado. A draught of water or rather half-a-dozen made a little improvement, and restored my faculty of articulation.

“ My dear, you smoked too much for a

beginner. You should have been more moderate. You know, it takes some time to make a smoker. You should have taken a whiff only now and then, and have given over when you felt the sickness coming on."

I was conscious how ridiculous I looked, and, as I became a little better, I observed my brother turn his face and go behind me to conceal a laugh. Before the sickness the sensation was celestial to be sure ; it lifted my soul to heaven and was a most effectual antidote to the grief for which I took it, nor do I think that its efficacy as an antidote was less during and for some time after the sickness. For the sickness as completely withdrew my mind, not by coaxing or enticing but by main force, from the subjects of my grief and disappointments, as the reveries divine inspired by the smoke.

The best physician probably you can call in for the cure of sorrow, is sorrow of some other description. Grief cures grief, pain cures pain, as humours are drawn from one part of the body to another by revulsion. Sore eyes have been

healed by an issue in the arm. I recovered, however, if I remember right, in the course of an hour. They were desirous of repose, and not without reason: it was late and they had had as anxious a day almost as myself. I would have smoked again, but shame forbade the very mention of it, and I therefore retired to bed with as much appearance of resignation and composure as possible—to bed! but was it to repose, to rest, to sleep, to nature's soft nurse? Oh, no.

CHAPTER X.

I UNDRESSED and got into bed. The room door was shut, and I inclosed, and determined to do so, myself and my sorrows within that apartment, so that they should be my own, my exclusive sorrows, unknown to others, unseen, unheard, unshared. I did not scorn sympathy, but I was extremely averse to impart my sorrows, like communicating an infectious disease to those whom I loved and could not bear to see pained. I therefore kept myself close, but soon could not refrain from rising and walking across the floor, and did really at one

time make a resolution never again to the last moment of my life to lay my body in a bed and between sheets and blankets, but to repose for the residue of my days on the floor or in a chair. And that resolution I should doubtless have carried into execution, how long God knows, had I been independent of my parents and had I possessed a house of my own.

And is that beautiful lady, whom I have loved until love had made me insensible to the fact that she was not mine but was to be; whom I had garnered up in my heart with the selfishness of a miser whose hoard is his life, his soul, his heaven, his God, and who could for me have turned the pains of dissolution into the beatitudes of heaven, is that image of an angel, if not an angel embodied and let down from Paradise by a chain of seraphim's weaving, a chain of gold, such gold as grows in heaven, such gold as heaven is paved with, love, love, love, is that I cannot describe as anything but my, my only love, my first, my last, in the arms, the embrace of the devil's own creation in mockery of Adam! Is it so? Have I lived

to see the day, the night, the damning night?

But I live, I must live ; the everlasting will not let me die, nor yet will he let me live. For is this life ? Then what are the pains of death ? “ Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said there is a man-child conceived ; because it shut not up my mother’s womb nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.” Would there were in this world and in reality such a river Lethe as the ancients feigned or fancied in their infernal regions. Surely, when the imagination entered their heads, they must have suffered as I do. But what am I to think of Jane ? Is it come to this ? Could she really abjure her first love, her love felt, sworn, plighted to me, not at an altar of men’s erection it is true, but at the altar within the vail, the holy of holies, the shrine of a heart burning as pure and holy, undefiled and undefilable, as the fire which descended from heaven and for ever burned for the consumption of the Jewish sacrifices. Her heart swore to mine, they kissed, they embraced, they vowed to be for ever not two hearts but

one: that neither length nor breadth, nor height nor depth, nor things present nor things to come, nor death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor heaven nor hell, should disunite them. And yet within a twelvemonth—twelvemonth, a year—let me see—for less, not half that, and she is another's, the bride of one too, to whom I was Hyperion to a satyr. Oh ! let me not think of it. “Frailty, thy name is woman.”

Amid all this grief, which devoured, not a part, the core, but the whole undivided total of my soul, amid this ocean of sorrow, there was a drop, it was but a drop, but a drop there certainly was of solace: it was a hope that she would repent, that her heart plucked so violently from its proper place would rebound, and finding no access to its former temple, would be as miserable an outcast as my own. Yes, I did hope that she would repent, be sorry, be wretched, and this drop, this single drop of consolation in the ocean of my sorrows, was like what would have been the drop of water from the tip of

Lazarus's finger on the tongue of Dives as he was tormented in the awful flames.

Satiety, methought, would soon succeed to the zest of first fruition, and, when the rage of passion had subsided, she would be a cool listener to reason and reflection. Pandora's box had been emptied, but hope, though a little one, was it not a little one? remained behind and illumined with a solitary ray the dark chaos of my soul torn asunder by conflicting passions. She could not love Mr. De Witt, she could not but abhor him. I was, I had been, and having been once could not be deposed, the sole emperor of her heart. How then could she give it to another? She never had. Her hand, her plight, her troth, or whatever else upon earth they choose to call it, she had given, but her heart—her heart—it was not hers to give.

I lay with my head reclining on my hand and my elbow on the pillow, how long I know not, a century it might have been, without thinking of or wooing sleep. So perfectly devoid

of all inclination for the oblivious repose did I find my mind, my head, my eyelids, that I thought I should never need that refreshment again. I did not exclaim, "How have I frightened thee, gentle sleep, that thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down." Those might do that who desired and longed for sleep. I had no wish for it. I completely forgot that it was necessary, until Aurora began to cast, not her shadow like coming events, but her light before her, and reminded me that presently I must rise and show myself below, whether I should have slept or not, and without that cosmetic what would be my complexion at the breakfast-table.

I endeavoured therefore to banish thought. I covered myself over as if to shut out the biting frost and blasts of winter. I compressed my lips to interdict all soliloquy, and endeavoured to snore as if already submerged over head and ears in Lethe. It was an agonizing effort to be calm, the incarceration of the winds in the cave of Æolus. I carried a thousand daggers in my thoughts, indignation at Jane, and the malice of

a demon to her friends. How then could sleep visit my eyelids, that gentle, peaceable nurse, that delights in down and composure. Yet I strove to be calm. I thought warmth would produce a torpor, and that nature would sink from sheer exhaustion, and then began to hope for the greatest blessing merely sublunary God or nature, I thought, could at that time bestow, forgetfulness of myself and of all, if it were only for a very short period, a few moments.

But my brother, as I have related, had been ill, exceedingly ill, and so far from being convalescent, he was now growing much worse. The excitement of the day had no doubt been very adverse to his recovery ; his complaint requiring stillness of mind as well as of body. About this time then, a few minutes before dawn, when it was doubtful whether it was day or night, I heard several very pitiable moans, as of one in great anguish. I immediately rose, and, had it not been for his pain, should have been glad of the excuse. I found him writhing in great agony : no position was endurable : he lay as on some burning marl. I asked him if I could be

of service, but in such a subdued voice, that he saw, though I loved him as brother should love brother, my thoughts were far away. My mind had left my lips to perform the office of speaking by themselves, and when he requested me to give him the medicine which lay beyond his reach, my mind could just return as if merely to do that and then it reverted to its more important and all-absorbing task. I gave him the medicine, the labelled draught, and he became easier, and wished, notwithstanding his pain, to give me that consolation which he required himself. I reminded him of the doctor's advice, far more precious than his medicine, that he should be as still as possible and not stir a limb, not even his tongue; and that even his mind should be a stagnant pool. He was so much better, that it was not necessary to alarm the house.

I went to the window and looked out between the curtains. The twilight seemed to be diminished, but still it was a most lovely morn. Soon after the sun rose in all his glory, and

reminded me of the morning, the splendid, brilliant morn, when I left Oxford for ever.

“Yes,” said I, “where is honour, where is love, where is bliss and heaven below?” Hope had told me a very flattering tale. Imagination floated me “for many summers in a sea of glory,” but farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness. I must now hide my diminished head before the superior splendour of a maniac. And she is this moment in the bosom of that maniac, and her lips meet his, and her breath mingles with his, and she is happy, is she? happy as none are, save on the bridal night and with their youthful love. Is it possible? I thought she had been mine, my own, my indefeasible right, “but nothing can we call our own but death.” Of that only are we sure: we shall die, it is appointed once, but else know we nothing in this world. “How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world. Fie on’t, oh, fie!”

It now grew cloudy and exceedingly dark. There was a red glaring light thrown against

the heavens in one direction, which I had often gazed upon when retiring to bed, and as it lay nearly in the direction of her father's house, I could not behold it without the association of her, her home and my love for her. It was the reflection in the atmosphere from the blaze of a large foundry about two or three miles off. No sooner did the darkness come on, than it and all its associations confronted me, and I could not refrain from saying to myself,

“ I have often looked upon thee in a happier mood, never did I think I should behold thee in my present. For years hast thou flickered in the heavens, ever since indeed my memory can identify my being, and thou wilt thus illumine the welkin years after I am unknown, a food to worms.”

And then again revenge lifted up my spirits from the abyss of torture in which they had sunk, and I thought of her friends, her avaricious sire, her mother, her sisters, her brothers. They thought, no doubt, much of this marriage : it was what they would call a match. Their daughter and sister had not at least con

taminated their blood, ignoble as it was, by some impure mixture with a stream of unknown source. No, he was a gentleman, and she would never be less than a lady. Yet they had known of our love and approved of it too. But I was then a rising star, or at least supposed to be, a brilliant meteor just appearing above the horizon, and promising to shine more and more bright and glorious until I reached my meridian. The university was to invest me in the robe of Rabelais. I was to return laden with honours and beautiful with assurances of future preferments.

But "how are the mighty fallen," Darius fallen, fallen, fallen from his high estate. I was now indeed not the bright and morning star, not a meteor arresting the attention and stretching the expectations of many, but a vapour which had appeared for a very short time and then vanished away—an *ignis fatuus*, a Will o' the wisp, a Peg with the lantern, which had blazed for a moment and been extinguished in a marsh. I was handsome before, they thought me beautiful and extolled my person as

too prepossessing for my sex, but now, when fortune had turned her back upon me, I had in their eyes neither comeliness nor form, and as a match was anything but desirable.

Thus it is at present, but will it be so always, will it be so long, will their felicity continue unimpaired, without the loss of a single sweet, for a twelvemonth? No, it would not be earthly bliss, if it would: such belongs only to heaven. But there was one flaw to which their happiness was liable, more than the general run of sublunary bliss: before another year should be gone, he might be raving mad. They might see him raving, and hear him blaspheming, mistaking his wife, his beautiful consort for a demon and vowing her destruction, or vociferating avaunt to her as to some horrible apparition. What would they not think of him then? And how would they not repent that they had ever cut off the true course of love.

How glad they would be, that they could do what defies omnipotence, undo the gordian knot of wedlock and tie her to me with all my faults

and failings on my head, obscure, unknown, or where known, despised ! Yes, he might be mad ten times in the year, mad and never have a glimmering of reason more. And God knows my heart, and I wish my reader to know it too, I confess my sin and express my repentance, I could not but desire it, pray for it, glory in the anticipation of it, and derive comfort in the midst of all my troubles from the belief that it would be so.

Then thought I again, what will be the depth of their repentance, if I should prosper, and though now fallen, should rise to the glory with which imagination had invested me ! How will they mourn and lament ! Yea, verily, their abode will be a place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. I know their avarice, and should fortune or rather I should say Providence, once more lift up his countenance upon me, their hearts will quiver with anguish as mine does now. And what is there to prevent me ? I am young : I will be industrious and persevering. *Nulla dies sine linea* shall be

my motto. I will mount the ladder, and, when at the summit, feast my soul on their remorse and too late repentance.

And I was really so elevated with this aerial edification, that I could not contain myself, and as if it had all been a reality, "my lungs began to crow like chanticleer." My brother was alarmed and inquired what was the matter. He thought that this crowing had been the sound of weeping, whereas it was in truth an imperfectly suppressed cachination. His voice, however, recalled to my recollection, that I was not alone, a fact of which I appeared wholly uncognizant. Notwithstanding his danger and my affection for him, such at that time was my state of mind, that, had he died, I could not, I do really believe, have shed a single tear for his irreparable loss to me. I was in his bedroom and did not know it. If every drop of ocean had been a pang, and I had been placed in the centre of the whole, if the ocean has a centre, I could not have been more surrounded, oppressed, overwhelmed with grief, and yet did imagination

so place me through joy in the very heart of heaven, that I could not refrain from laughing.

What an indescribable, incomprehensible creature is man! I could laugh in the very heart of sorrow. He began to talk to me in his usual consolatory style, seasoning his sensible and really good advice with the precepts of devotion. I affected to assent, to consent, to acquiesce, to approve, when in reality my attention was vacillating as quick as lightning between his words and very different things. He felt so much better, that he advised me to leave him and retire to rest, of which he thought I stood much in need.

Once more I was in bed, and could see from where I lay the trees, the rookery, and the sun ascending his perpendicular path. Said I, "O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers, whence are thy beams, O Sun, whence thine everlasting light?" The trees were but a fruitful source of melancholy recollection, and the quotation from Ossian was the same. I had often looked at those stately trees,

when I used to rise cheerful in the morning, mercurial, volatile, elastic, and had as often repeated with pleasure that very quotation. I thought I had done all these things for the last time, for no more could happiness revisit my heart, than blindness could the eyes of Milton, as he himself so pathetically laments.

But I was now entirely exhausted. Nature was worn out. I did feel a heaviness on the eyelids, and was conscious that it would be well if I could, were it only for a few minutes, unbend the bow which had been for so many hours so intensely strung. It is a well-known fact, that, very often when a man could not, if he would give the world, sleep during the night, he finds it creep upon him irresistibly when daylight is cast upon his face and he ought to rise and gird himself for the occupations of the day. Thus it was with me now, Morpheus hovered over my eyelids with his wings laden with poppies, and, as I was sensible that he was gradually sealing up my senses in forgetfulness, I thought to myself, for speak I could not, that I should have some sweet, undisturbed,

strengthening sleep, which would recruit my mental and physical powers for another day's campaign of unavailing lamentation and woe. And I did sleep: the sinews were unstrung, my whole corporeal frame was relaxed, but I doubt whether my poor soul, my inward man, were not more lashed, goaded, scourged and harrassed than when all my senses were wide awake.

I was in the fields, I was at church, I was a clergyman and married my Jane to a monster with a cloven foot, I was happy, I was miserable. I wandered over the country, and over moorlands, and mountains, and valleys, and rivers, and oceans, and I found no rest for the sole of my foot, like Noah's dove, nor yet for my soul, like the unpardoned, miserable, condemned sinner, whose sentence has been pronounced and who is on the eve of execution, of incarceration in the burning brimstony lake with devils and reprobate spirits. And I sought, methought, for years the object alone I loved, but found no traces of her nor heard any tidings of her abode. Anon I was in a great wood overshadowed with large, spreading trees, dark, gloomy, dismal,

and in the midst there was a road through which I could scarcely see my way. I was lost in the branches; thorns and brambles held me fast, and I struggled with all my might for extrication and suddenly escaped, and immediately found myself in a sick man's dormitory.

I was by his bed-side and saw him fastened to his bed with straps of leather. He could not rise, though he struggled with more than human power. The straps which held his hands and arms were scarcely strong enough, and several around him, whom I did not know, seemed afraid lest he should disentangle himself, and pulled the straps tighter and tighter. Then I heard him shout with the voice of an angel, as if he would have awaked the dead, and he swore and blasphemed, and laughed and hallooed. And anon I beheld a beautiful young lady clothed in the purest white, she might have been an angel of light, and she shrouded her face with a handkerchief fair as the drifted snow, and shook her head and wept and wrung

her hands as if she would have dissolved into tears.

Then I looked, and lo, a number besides, father and mother, sisters and brothers, mourned and bewailed, as if this had been the house of death and the spirit had just quitted the tenement of clay of a beloved son or daughter. I saw them not only weep but bear on their faces terror, grief, shame and repentance, and heard them curse the day they ever saw him. I could not but wonder and gaze wistfully on his and their lineaments to trace out, if possible, the marks of recognition, and I looked until my eyes had almost dropped from their sockets, and their strings had cracked, and his contour evolved from the mist which seemed to enshroud it, and grew gradually more and more palpable to view, and enlarged more and more into a hideous bloated face, and it was, yes, it was, as sure as there is a heaven above and an earth beneath, the very visage of my rival.

Then I turned, as if touched by some invisible hand, and beheld the mourners clear and

unquestionable as at noonday, and they were her sire and brothers and sisters and mother. I heard their lamentation and loud wailing, and his maniac ear-rending vociferation, and I burst into a loud and long continued cachinnation, which swallowed up all their piping and roaring and his bellowing, as the tempestuous ocean the shouts and cries of the distressed mariners, and I made the apartment where I was and the whole house indeed ring and re-echo as if a horse had been neighing within its walls. In an instant I felt myself shaken by the hand and the shoulders, and found myself broad staring awake and my lungs agitating my whole person.

“My dear Jonadab, what is the meaning of all this laughter? Do you know where you are? Oh! my dear, have you lost your reason through grief? Don’t you know who I am, and your poor, afflicted, unhappy father? You don’t know, love, how unhappy you make us all. Oh! that it should have come to this.”

I beheld them weeping and the tears chasing one another down the pale, attenuated, care-

worn cheeks of my father, and I thought surely these are the mourners and I knew it not, and they are all whom I have left me to love and esteem. I inquired what had happened, and endeavoured to comfort them and to dry up their scalding tears. They asked if I could not recollect that I had been laughing so immoderately, and I told them that I was not quite sure of it but retained something like a recollection of it, but that I had been dreaming. This effectually cooled the vehemence of their grief. But they thought such boisterous expressions of joy very preposterous and a paradox in one overwhelmed with sorrow. Sleep, said they, is the best physician to a woe-worn mind.

I rose with some alacrity. My griefs the preceding day and night had been the commotion of a mighty tempest, but sleep had rocked "my brains in cradle of the rude imperious surge," and I felt new vigour to my soul, fresh and increased elasticity to my limbs, my strength renewed like the eagle's. I performed the necessary ablutions to perfection,

and then made my appearance in the breakfast-parlour, sleek and clean, and neat and elegant, "like the whining school-boy with his satchel and shining morning face," and strove to be myself again. I had turned the house upside down with my individual grief, had converted a well-regulated happy home into chaos come again, confusion confounded, and it was now my duty to bring things again into something like order. I had been like a drunkard, who has thrown chairs and tables about and broken glasses, and the next morning found a bill laid before him in which the damages were not forgotten.

Well, the dream, every syllable of which was as fresh on the page of memory as if the whole account had just come from the press and the sheets had been laid before me for perusal, the dream, I say, was so congenial to the spirit which then ruled within me, that it diffused a hilarity, something more than a bare calm serenity, over the surface of my soul, and I thought and said to myself, "if I mean to make some small amends to my poor afflicted friends, for the invasion I have made upon their peace

and comfort, now is the moment," for more than a moment or two I did not expect my present heaven of soul to last. I therefore did my best to speak comfortably and cheeringly to them, and made my face play the hypocrite to my heart. The dream, the dream, helped wonderfully to the personation of a character which I was not.

"Yes," thought I, "that dream was an augury of better days, better to me. The Deity speaks sometimes in dreams and visions of the night. And, oh, the very idea of that madness and their woe and wailing paved the way to my happiness, if happiness more I was ever to know in time. And was not this wicked? If not revenge indeed, for I would not be the cause of his madness and their grief, yet was it in thought, and oh, God sees the thoughts and will reckon with us about them. But had I been the cause, the sole, undivided, individual cause of his madness and their consequent lamentation, had my hand alone deranged the intellectual system had their death followed as the effect, I could not at that time have deemed myself a murderer,

at least conscience would not have cast it in my teeth. Oliver Cromwell sat as judge over Charles the First, signed the warrant for his execution, thus macadamized the way to his own greatness, and yet, I dare venture to say, never once thought himself a murderer. Passion of one sort or other can thus blind the eyes to the nature of facts. But I was not the cause nor could I be.

I breakfasted and retired. The elasticity of my spirits was nearly over, and they began to settle into a staid, regular, deep dejection. I sought a small apartment or parlour, seldom used except as a dressing-room for my mother. That, for the future, with her consent was to be my smoking-room, an arrangement made the night before at my initiation: they wished to conceal my practice of smoking from my father, or, if not altogether, the extent to which I indulged it. It was but a closet with a small window looking into the fields, and afterwards, when I had made myself a master in the profession, I filled it with smoke as completely almost as a steam-boiler is charged with the

aqueous gas. The window served as the safety-valve, or the density of the vapour must have choked up the issues of life.

Thither I now repaired to chew the cud of reflection. It was morning, but I took a pipe. It was to be my companion, a terror to all care. Behold me then at it again, but more gently. I threw out a whiff only now and then, and laid down the pipe at the most distant approach of nausea. Thus in the course of a week did I complete my apprenticeship, and become as clever as the most accomplished master. This remark, however, I could not but make, that continually during my practice for improvement, when a few whiffs had satiated if not sickened, I laid down the instrument with a most determined resolution never to take it up again; and yet, when the effect of the smoke had worn away, which was generally in the course of twenty minutes, I found the pipe in my hand again, frequently without being able to recollect having taken it up. There, however, it was, recharged, the match applied, and I was firing away as hard as ever, just as if an eternal peace

had not been twenty minutes before agreed upon between us, ratified and established.

Such is the sorcery of this habit. What hundreds of resolutions have I not made, and broken at the expiration of a few minutes, often deliberately, often unwittingly. I abhorred the practice and yet loved it; and thus all the years I have been a smoker, have love and hatred been succeeding each other. Blessed, however, had I been, blessed as the just made perfect should I think myself, had that been my only failing, solitary, without any associate vice.

CHAPTER XI.

I FOUND smoking in the course of a month had produced a wonderful alteration for the worse in my whole appearance. No doubt its power is not so tremendous with those who live better, but with me it operated like some secret, invisible disease preying upon the vitals, drying up the springs of life, carrying on the work of physical destruction with the despatch of a rapid consumption. No one, at the expiration of a month, would have thought that nature had ever painted a delicate vermillion hue upon my checks. They were made of parchment. I might have been for years im-

mured night and day in a solicitor's office, until my complexion had become that of the skin they write upon. I never saw a mummy, unless it was at that time my own face. And I was so attenuated, so meagre, so worn away, that my skin was the covering of bones, not of flesh. How old was I? Who would have thought me a young man?

Verily, thought I, as I one day viewed the wreck of my visage in a looking-glass, I need not say one syllable of De Witt's age or cadaverous face. I am as old myself and almost as hideous. My eyes had lost their fire, not a single scintillation did they emit. Formerly the white was perfect, clear as the Indian's, and the pupil lustrous and brilliant, a twinkling, glittering star; now the whole was glazed, sickly, the dull, leaden planet Saturn. What should have been white was yellow, and the apple, languishing, dead. One part of my contemplated revenge on the Seymours, the whole, father, mother, sons and daughters—was, as often as opportunity should present me with the power, to exhibit my handsome, blooming com-

plexion, my flashing, vivid, sparkling eye, my youthful elasticity of gait, as thorough a contrast to Witt's in my estimation as Hyperion to a satyr. How disappointed and chagrined therefore was I, when I found my face the reflection of Don Quixote's, the renowned knight de la Mancha.

I was lantern-jawed, and my gait was as feeble, tottering, infirm, unsteady, as if I had been completing the latter part of the Sphinx's enigma, walking or having need to walk on three legs instead of two. It is surprising what an imbecility smoking has inflicted upon my legs, knees, and whole frame. Youth was passed and gone. I was no longer a young man, but in the middle of life, if not rather beyond that. How could I set myself off to the objects of my malice as a foil to their newly acquired relative. Malice I say, for by what other passion could I be actuated, whether I chose to think so or not? I was not as ugly, that was impossible, and I thought for ever must remain so, for I had not

the prodigious disproportion of limb and lineament to constitute a most transcendently grotesque figure, a De Witt.

I was now, therefore, obliged to hide myself in the house, because I thought myself really a shame to be seen. So far was I from seeking opportunities of presenting myself to their notice, that the very sight of any of them at a distance operated as a scarecrow. "Heavens," said I, "I would not be seen by any of them in the present state of my exterior for a fortune or a bishopric." But what was I to do? So long as I smoked, this must be my condition. Worse it could not be, for even already the worms would have despised me for a single meal. But it was not likely to improve. I had already passed the Rubicon: what could I do? I had proclaimed and was in the act of waging eternal war against my constitution, health, and much more therefore personal beauty. This companion I could not forsake! I had hugged the pipe as an everlasting associate, which nothing earthly, neither rain nor sunshine, neither adversity nor prosperity, neither good report nor evil report,

should induce me to disown or forsake, and I found now to my sorrow, that he was an everlasting leech which could never be gorged, and that whether I would forsake him or not, he was determined, as long as I had one single drop of blood circulating in my veins, he never would leave or forsake me.

“My greatest misfortune,” said I, “the origin indeed of all my disasters, has been evil communications, which Menander says and St. Paul after him, ‘corrupt good manners.’ And here have I selected one, who to all appearance promises to be as morally corrupting as the greatest and most determined profligate. I thought Hartley in Oxford the greatest evil that heaven ever poured out of its vial of wrath, and I think so still, and shall as long as I am capable of thinking at all, but next to him I believe my present one is the worst. What! I shall be dead in a twelvemonth.” After much deliberation I concluded that I must shake off the habit. But how must that be accomplished? “Oh,” said I, “man is a free agent, or not answerable for sin nor consequently a sinner. It can be

done and it shall be done. I will be as handsome as ever, and, with the aid of an elegant tailor, I will be the very bird of Venus. Every eye shall turn in admiration; even envy shall not be able to turn away its head as if it saw me not." As one bad habit begets another, so sometimes one will banish another, and I bethought me, that *thus* I could get quit of my acquaintance with, and delight in, the society of the pipe.

I replenished my snuff-box with the finest flavoured, the most exquisitely pungent, the most attractive food for the olfactory member, that ever adorned the box, the hand, the finger and thumb, of a motley fool. I recommenced with renewed and increased fervour the polite, the gentlemanly, the most accomplished practice of a fop. I determined also to be as little as possible in the house. The sight of the room was an incomparably stronger attraction for the pipe, than the snuff was a repulsion. If I continued much in the house, it was clearly impossible to wean myself from the abhorred habit. Into the fields then I plunged, glorying in my

resolution. I could not but admire my self-command, a virtue than which not any one is more useful, not any one more rare.

I will never smoke again. I am surprised that any event, any misfortune, however grievous to be borne, should have induced me to harbour for a moment the thought of betaking myself to such a disgusting habit for relief. I came to the haunts of my boyhood, of my youthful reveries, when love smiled upon me and lighted in my breast the bewitching lamp of hope, and I thought of her whom I had certainly lost for ever, and I grieved as one forlorn, disconsolate, desolate, whose heart was torn and never could be healed, and I felt myself a lost man and cared not what became of me—and I turned as suddenly as the report of a pistol and hied to the small, confined apartment, the smoking-room, as fast as if I had forgotten something of very great importance, which it required the utmost precipitation to correct or perform, determined to smoke as long as my lungs could perform the necessary function of respiration.

Again the smoke curled beautifully, and the

snuff-box was laid on the shelf, a useless piece of furniture, once valued and now forgotten. The narcotic vapour again soothed the evil spirit within me, and I began to be as happy as ever. If any man wishes to build castles in the air, I mean to do it to perfection, castles of celestial magnificence, or even infernal such as Pandemonium, let him smoke. Only smoke and you may fancy yourself anything, a monarch, an archangel riding on the whirlwind and directing the storm, or an angel bestriding the ocean and the land, or what is infinitely more than any one of these things or all of them put together, you may fancy yourself a successful suitor, the ever blessed bridegroom of her you love. I never was an opium-eater, and therefore can offer no opinion of his comparative bliss, but if you seek the most perfect felicity prior to, or out of, or independently of heaven, smoke, provided you do not want that felicity to be eternal. Yes, I will smoke, and never, never, never think of giving it over again. If I lose thereby my health and beauty, be it so : God's will be done. I smoked and was again translated into Paradise. But

again in the course of half-an-hour I had fallen like Satan in the realms of chaos and old night, ten thousand fathoms deep: the pipe was my abhorrence, my execration.

And I gazed with absent, lack-lustre eye on the shivered fragments, and thought really nothing now can give me an hour's satisfaction, and I know not in what to seek it purer and more perfect. As I ruminated on I knew not what, the satiating and nauseating effects of the smoke had passed away, and a desire for another pipe as imperceptibly returned, and I quite as naturally turned my eyes in all directions round in search of a substitute for the fragments at my feet. I now determined to be more moderate in the indulgence, by which I meant, that I would never give over the pleasure, but that I would not make the volumes of incense, the delicious perfume, ascend in such dense and rapid clouds. I would take more time: a single pipe should last me an hour. Pleasure, at least earthly, cannot be perfect in both its intensity and duration. In this world, pleasure of every kind is like a pipe of tobacco. You may make

it last an hour or only twenty minutes. In the latter case it is more sweet but evanescent, a vapour which appears for a very little time and then vanishes away: in the former, it is more permanent, but tougher and grosser, a lamp which casts only a glimmering light, imperfect, unsatisfactory, but lasts a whole evening of a dull, dark, winter's night.

I commenced then in a deliberate, solemn, stately, statesmanlike manner. I sent a volume up to the ceiling, like a school-boy's soap and water bubble, and then withdrew the tube from my mouth, waited a few seconds as nearly as I could calculate without a watch, then repeated the operation and a similar pause, and thus I continued for some time, I know not how long, but not very long. Certainly I was not sick, nor disgusted. I did not throw the pipe down in abhorrence, nor did I resolve and re-resolve to smoke no more. But there was no reverie, no celestial visions, no trance, no rapture, no sailing in the clouds, no bliss, no terrestrial heaven. I was acting as if I came into the world merely to be a sort of smoking automaton, alternately

to smoke and look at my pipe, calculating the intervals to a second. Thus to smoke was torture. I therefore abandoned this plan also, and commenced a fumigation like a Dutch steam-vessel, to which a Dutch smoker has not inaptly been assimilated.

Ideas of glory, aerial edifices of the most enchanting construction and workmanship, rose up from the previously stagnant pool of my mind, fast as, far faster than the smoke issued from my mouth into the thin air and the saliva into an appropriate depository. Again for about twenty minutes this mental scene of fairy realms endured, and then all was shivered together with my pipe in an instant on the floor. It was bliss divine while it lasted, but bliss too blissful in this combined state of happiness and misery to last long. Again I sought the open air for relief from *ennui*. I deplored the misfortune of my new thralldom. I had been a slave to love, I was now a slave to tobacco. I had changed one master for another, a great tyrant though not greater, still there was this advantage attending his service, that I had not thereby, that

I was aware of, spread unhappiness through the house like a plague. My friends were considerably recovered from their fears and griefs on my account, and this afforded me a very agreeable reflection. After therefore having wandered some distance, I returned home with my accustomed load of wretchedness, and had not been in the house five minutes, before I found that the unhappiness of my mother and brother on my account had by no means ceased, but had taken a different turn.

“Jonadab, we are so uneasy about you that we really don’t know what to do or where to go. I am sure that, if you do not take great care you will not survive many weeks, perhaps not many days. We have held our tongues for two or three days, in hopes that you would get the better of your disappointment and grief, but we are now convinced that, unless you take the greatest care, your days are numbered. You used to be the admiration of the whole town and now you look twenty years older and all your beauty is gone.”

“But my health is good. Judging from my

feelings, I was never in better health in my life."

"But it is impossible for you to be in good health and be so thin and ill. Upon my word, you are not like yourself at all."

"How is it possible," said my brother, "for him to be in good health or to look well? He eats nothing. He has never eaten anything worth mentioning since that—that marriage."

This was the first time since it took place, that the mention of that marriage had sounded in my ears. It is surprising how curious the sound was to me; and I could not credit the reality of the event. It sounded like something which had been talked of, not like an event which either had taken place or ever would. My brother had anticipated the curious, indescribable sensation in my mind, and therefore started back at the approach of the word in the above sentence, as if it had been something he was either afraid or ashamed to mention. I myself turned from him as if ashamed to meet his eye.

"As for dinner, he has shunned it with the

exception of once, and then he might almost as well have been absent. Nothing solid above the size of a marble entered his mouth ; I am sure of it, for I took particular notice. And at breakfast and tea he eats no bread, he seems as if he could swallow nothing but what is liquid."

All this was true. Smoking completely destroyed my appetite, but they were not aware that it was that. They laid the blame on my disappointment, which was only indirectly the cause. I thought I could have lived upon the noxious plant. So little solid, substantial food entered my stomach, that it was not to be wondered at if my whole outward man exhibited a lamentable deficiency in the requisite support. Love, however, thwarted, crossed, for ever denied its object, love bore the whole undivided blame.

"If I were you," continued my brother, "I would be too proud to let anyone see, that they had mortified me so much. You should bear it with the utmost indifference, the coolness of a Cato, show yourself to them looking as

well as ever and as unconcerned, and let them see that you do not care a sou for them, or an alliance with them. If they see you so wretched they will secretly laugh at you, profess to pity you and to wish that your love had been less aspiring. I should be more mortified at that than at the loss of my first love."

"Laugh at me, didst thou say, pity me ! The thought is winged with the withering power of the thunder. The bare idea is capital punishment : the fact would be, not death, but positive translation to the tortures of the lost. Never say so again. Yet—yet—as thou sayest, pride, pride is a useful thing. What makes some cool-blooded philosophers bear the rubs, and thumps, and buffets of outrageous fortune, and treat them with contempt ?

'Tis pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of soul,
I think the Romans call it stoicism.

"Stoicism ! blessed, most honourable philosophy. This pride bears misfortunes with all the omnipotence of Almighty grace. I am a stoic, a disciple of Zeno. I will laugh at the

frowns and malice of the world. No, I will not laugh, that is not stoical enough: I will neither laugh nor weep. My face, my mouth, my very muscles shall be immoveable. Laugh, despise me for my lack of beauty, my pale face! I'll to my toilet, I'll make myself as sleek and pretty as a dancing master, a general cicisbeo. I will make myself a most marvellous proper man."

Thus I ran on for I know not what space longer. He had struck on a key which vibrated every nerve in my whole system, electrified my whole body and soul. It was the chord of indignation. He had restored the dead to life. Before, I was dejected, lifeless, now the quicksilver of my blood rose to boiling heat. He saw and heard the visible raving effects of his appeal to my pride, and was determined to follow it up and turn my craven dejection of soul into the most resolute self-possession, by an additional argument, though by no means so gigantic in its powers of persuasion.

"Besides, consider how you are ruining your fine understanding. You used to be at the head

of the school. None had any chance to compete with you. It was thought presumption in the cleverest boy to set himself up as your rival. What a strong memory you had, what a quickness of apprehension, what a depth of penetration, what refinement of taste. You are now the reverse of all this. Your memory is quite gone. They will think you never were a scholar. They will despise you for supposed ignorance, and perhaps call you a poor imbecile."

All this was very true, and certainly produced some effect, but nothing like the impression, which, judging from my former ambition, he had anticipated. I was once ambitious, Oh ! how ambitious ! But the eagle had descended from his flight, was maimed, winged, and so accustomed of late to a humble flight near the dust which erst he spurned, that the very desire to take a noble range had quitted for ever his now grovelling soul.

"Ah," said I, "I once possessed, I believe, an understanding, a faculty, a taste. Is it peculiarly, more eminently, the destiny of such,

that misfortunes, vice, and habits shall degrade, debase their noble souls, and make them more contemptible than others of far inferior mind? It has been thought so. Wit and wine have been called very near relations, a sort of brothers or sisters, for we will not quarrel about their sex. 'I could make seven noblemen,' said Harry the Eighth, 'out of seven ploughmen, but I could not make one Holbein out of seven peers.' Yet Hans was so fond of a jorum and low company, the very lees of society, that the great Erasmus undertook the ungracious task of attempting his reformation."

I was sorry to see them so unhappy, and fully determined to abandon forthwith the offensive, unhealthy habit I had commenced, but to which, I flattered myself, I had not yet fairly enslaved myself. It destroyed constitution, health, and conferred ugliness, and whatever else I could recollect objectionable I treasured up in my mind and pondered over, in order to strengthen the good resolution which I had formed. Such was my serious, deliberate wish

to smoke no more, that this time at any rate I really believed my effort would be successful. I determined also to take a little time for consideration, and to commence the battle in good earnest to-morrow.

CHAPTER XII.

“JONADAB, your brother and I have just been considering that it is necessary for you to live better, to take more support. Great smokers always take something to drink better than water. You must drink some good ale to your pipe and then you will not lose flesh. I am shocked to see you looking so ill, and fear lest you should go into a consumption.”

This she said in the simplicity of her heart, and no more dreamed of the tremendous mischief she was persuading me, nor did I then, than of tempting me to commit the sin unpardonable. She, however, it is true, the most

affectionate of mothers, made the proposal, and I accepted it. The flood-gates were opened. I took the beverage, as I thought, for my necessary support ; but who can calculate how imperceptibly vice steals upon a man, until it completely overpowers him and spoils him of all his goods, the virtues, the excellencies of his mind. I commenced, however, now the combination of a pipe and a glass, and certainly thought the one a wonderful improvement to the other. The ale supplied ten times the strength for smoking, and only enabled me to smoke so much the longer, the more furiously, and with so much the greater pleasure ; consequently the evil either way was as broad as it was long.

You may think that it was exceedingly imprudent in my mother to propose it, inasmuch as she must have heard of smoking and drinking being for the most part inseparable, and of the former leading if not driving to the grossest excesses in the latter. Whether it was imprudent or not, I will not undertake to determine, but of this I am certain, as I wish I were of

heaven, that leading me to drunkenness was, I will not say the farthest thought in her mind, for that implies that it was there though at a great distance, but that it was what never found an entrance there, much more a comfortable harbour. Yet it is lamentable to think, that she the most affectionate of mothers, first proposed the pipe, she first proposed the glass. Love prompted the overture. She was sorry to see me unhappy, and afraid of my health and life, and therefore proposed as a remedy what ultimately proved most destructive to both, and above all in addition fatal to the health of my soul. How often has love been a physician, which killed when it meant to cure ! Yet I was the primary cause, or shall I lay the blame on fortune ? This, of course, would be to blame Providence. Certain it was, I was unfortunate, unhappy, and I communicated the plague of my own heart, my own wretchedness, to my unhappy relations.

Why did I not fight against adversity ? Why did I not wage war against my own passions, and bring them into subjection to reason and

my knowledge of duty? Thousands would ask this question and answer it too, that I ought to have done so—thousands of unimpassioned mortals made of clay, without a spark of the Promethean fire. And I too should have said the same, if there had not been one passion which, so far as I could learn from my own experience and the universal consent of mankind of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, I believed to be invincible. The proof appeared to me to be the same as for the existence of a God, and I was very well satisfied with it. I thought that I could have been happy if I had not had love to contend with, but that my enemy was too powerful.

What degree and what sort of blame was due to my mother I could not determine. I smoked and drank ale this day for the first time; would that I could truly say it was the last. I did not begin without the evil even in its prospective mischief awakening my fears. My heart was not still—it smote me for the imprudence, and certainly afforded strong presentiment of what would be the consequence. It gave me good advice,

most unmistakable warning ; it croaked to my understanding most portentously.

It spoke not so loud, but let me not add to my other sins the disingenuousness of denying that it spoke at all. I had my fears. I knew that I was playing with a most dangerous and deadly weapon, on the brink of a bottomless gulph ; but like thousands of deluded victims, I promised to rue in time, and confided too implicitly in the strength of my own self-control. I did not consider that this strength of the soul would waste away as fast as the physical powers of my body ; that every draught to assuage, not a natural, but an acquired thirst, was a consumption to my self-denial.

I began, it is true, with very great caution, and determined merely to moisten my throat, not to deluge it—to gargle with a tea-spoonful, or at the most two, but most religiously to abstain from copious potations. And then it was very easy. The evil was in its bud, and could easily be nipped. I had not to gird my loins, as I had some years after, and to summon my whole strength to hack and hew down some

aged, evergreen, tough invincible yew tree. No, nothing more at present was required than bare volition. I could as easily abstain from excess as I could move my right arm, because I felt no inclination to drink but what was excited by the dryness in the throat. But considering how constantly in a great smoker the throat is smoke-dried and calls for some moisture, who can deny that learning to smoke is far more than the A B C towards the art of drinking? I was conscious therefore that a new danger was thrown in my way, and this gave additional strength to the resolution I had made of renouncing the pipe. As I said before, to-morrow was to be the day of trial.

I rose, washed, and prepared myself in every way for an exhibition of myself in public. This I did because I had discovered that the open air was the most powerful antidote to the offensive vapour of the pipe; in other words, that a thorough abandonment of smoking could not be effected without much exercise in the open air, and indeed walking out as much as possible for several days after it has been dis-

continued. This I observed then, and have proved by my own sad experience many a time since. I never could control and absolutely suppress the propensity if I stayed much in the house; and I believe every smoker who wishes to return to his quondam respectability in the rank of the creation, will find upon observation and experience the same truth. Shun the house, if you wish to shun the pipe. And as I am now speaking of the ways and means to be adopted, I may as well observe another circumstance I have noticed, viz: that soliloquising or talking to oneself constitutes a very great, I may rather say, an insurmountable obstacle in the way of success. Great smokers are often great soliloquisers, for smoking encourages mental abstraction and absurd reveries; and therefore, if you wish and are resolved to smoke no more, set a double watch on the doors of your lips, respire through the nostrils, and let your lips never open whenever you can avoid speaking.

Many who have for years never taken a pipe in hand, much more applied it to the mouth,

have returned to it in consequence of some sudden excitement putting the lips in motion, when there has been but the speaker to speak to. But there is not a smoker in the world or man who has been one, who knows not that the great difficulty of all, is grief or mental dejection. If your spirits are low, you will smoke. This was the mighty mountain, the Ben-Lomond, which at present crossed my path. I was unhappy, nor could anything I could think of, unless intoxication, infuse vivacity into my heart. Every pore of my soul was sealed to joy. I did not think I should ever know anything like permanent joy again. With this most formidable enemy had I to cope, in my present resolution and efforts to smoke no more, and great as it was, so firmly fixed was my mind, I did not despair.

After coming down stairs, I breakfasted without a moment's delay, and with as little, was pacing the verdant carpet of the meadows. I determined to accost no man, but, above all, myself, to shun indeed as much as possible, communion with my fellow-men that day,

devoting it entirely to the battle against my evil habit. And so deeply rooted was my resolution, that I soon began to think that it could not be eradicated by the impulse I was ever and anon liable to feel, and that it would produce the desired fruit. I was not mistaken. Man in general resolves and re-resolves, then dies the same. Thus Young quaintly sings, but truth is not always his. Man can do all things; triumph over himself, which is the most glorious ovation, as well as over the enemies of his country.

During one part of the day, I felt inclined to promenade in the streets, instead of my more sequestered haunts. I thought the bustle and animation of the inhabitants would be more cheering, and would prevent that dejection which was now growing habitual. How did everything I saw, in despite of my utmost endeavours to prevent it, discourse to me of my irreparable loss. Once at a distance I saw her brothers—my brothers-in-law they were to have been, so hope once flattered, and her cousins the Misses Jackson. They all seemed to be un-

conscious that my peace of mind had been for ever blasted. Yes, they tripped away as if no such marriage had been heard of, or as if it were only one of the millions of occurrences in the course of time, past and forgotten, a dream, a watch in the night.

Yet to me was it the want of all wants since Time began his march, that swallowed up in the vortex of its importance all others as minor and subordinate. What a weight, what an Etna upon my spirits were these mementos of my ill-fate, and how mightily did they drag me to the smoking apartment and its appliances ! but this day I conquered. Habit, like a strong man armed, knocked at the door of my heart for admittance very loudly ; but my dogged resolution, an inexorable porter, an incorruptible Cerberus, stoutly resisted, and I prevailed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next day of course I enjoyed an ovation. I rejoiced sincerely, and was congratulated by my friends on my so triumphant a victory over the pipe, and having now obtained the upper hand of the vice, I was determined to keep it.

We assembled at the breakfast-table, I, my father, mother and brother ; and now, when I appeared not so outrageously unhappy, our minds naturally and very properly reverted to the difficulty I found in meeting with a situation. We were a small family and isolated : though my father was respected for his piety and exemplary walk through life more than any

other man in the town, yet we stood very much alone in the world; we had no friends to look to.

Said my father : “ Have you any idea, Jonadab, where you can obtain a situation ? ”

“ None, if I speak the truth, and nothing but the truth should be spoken about it. I really do not know which way to turn.”

“ Well, my dear, I would have you by no means despair, much less to fret and vex yourself, for that is wicked. But you want to take orders. To be sure you have not waited long yet, for you have been only a few days at home, but I wish you to consider whether first of all it be God’s will that you should be a clergyman. You have no right to run, unless he call, and therefore I think you ought first to endeavour to obtain some situation in a school, and afterwards a title, if Providence should be pleased to throw one in your way.”

“ This I should be very glad to do, but I can no more obtain a school than I can a curacy.”

“ It will be necessary to inquire no doubt of any one likely to hear of such things. I think

it strange though that the tutors of your college should not assist you to a situation of this kind, they must hear of such appointments and receive applications. But you say they do not make it a point to assist an independent member. I think, however, it would not be amiss for you to try what importunity will do. I would write to them again, if I were you. You must also repeat your application to Mr. Scrapling, the vicar."

"I will certainly ask him again, and, may be, again and again, but I really have no opinion of his disposition to help me, and truth only obliges me to say so. You see he gave me several advertisements, to none of which have they ever had the politeness to answer I fear that the vicar was aware my applications would be in vain."

"I don't think that it at all follows. To advertisements for curates, especially promising a title for orders, you may depend upon it, many, very many applications are made, and that without a moment's delay, so that without the greatest promptitude I believe you need not

apply at all: that it is absurd—money and labour thrown away. If he has therefore given you several advertisements, I think he has clearly shown himself your friend, and as such, entitled to your respect. He is under no obligation, you know, to do so. Looking for them in various publications, such as magazines and newspapers, must cost him some trouble.”

“Now I think that, as vicar of the parish where I reside and have been brought up, and where my relations live and frequent his church, he is bound to assist me, and that it would be disgraceful for him not to do so. But be this as it may, I doubt very much, and I am sorry to say so, for I would not willingly lay anything falsely to his charge, whether these advertisements, which he has had the apparent kindness to put into my hand, were not old ones, inserted so long since, that he knew it to be ridiculous to expect a reply to any application for them. Not one letter I have written has been honoured with an answer.”

“My dear Jonadab, it is very sinful of you to think ill of Mr. Scrapling on what I believe

to be unfounded suspicion. Remember it is a breach of the commandment, 'thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,' or at any rate very much like it. Beg of God to forgive you and to make you more thankful."

"God forbid I should wrong him, but I cannot but feel a strong desire to see the periodicals, from which he professed to have received the advertisements. There can be no wrong in finding out the dates of them. The first, I think he said, was inserted in the 'Christian Remembrancer.' Let me see: where can I get to look at one? I will go to the booksellers and to the library."

"Think ill of no man, but rather pay him another visit, ask him to have the goodness to assist you again, and, if he gives you another advertisement, be thankful and pray for God's blessing upon your application. And, O my dear boy, remember you are coveting a most responsible office, and pray devoutly and perseveringly for meekness and ability for the discharge of its duties."

"What you say, Sir, is exceedingly proper

and of the greatest importance ; still, not having great confidence in the vicar's sincerity, I am anxious to find out some other friend. Who is there that I can consult ? I will, however, see the vicar first, and after my return we may be better able to judge what is best to be done."

"I am quite sure from the friendship he has already shown, that he will if he can, and God be willing, be of service to you. I am sorry you should think so ill of him. Take care, when you call upon him, that you show him all proper respect. Remember how God has lately visited his house."

The last observation inspired something like a hope, when there was none before. God had certainly given him a most tremendous blow, and I could not but think that his own impiety as a church-jobber had thus called down the divine vengeance. True, God smote the child, not the father, but we believe that he visits the sins of the father upon the children. The stroke was merciful. The child was fit for a celestial crown, and was taken away only from the evil

to come, and only a short time prior to the period appointed by nature. But how did the father suffer in his child ! Yes, it was the father whom the bolt struck. The child was dead at his feet without an instant's pain, and another moment beheld it in the mansions of the blessed. It was translated to heaven without its gross material part, that was all.

How different was the condition of the
! struck by the lightning and yet suffered to live. His heart was scorched and yet did not cease its motion, was blasted and yet was alive. My father, however, is right : such a deep domestic wound calls for commiseration, and should be healed, not irritated and inflamed.

Away then to the parsonage I posted, and again by stealth, ashamed for my fellow-townsmen to see or speak to me—me of whom such large hopes had been entertained and now a well-known needy pauper, for less I cannot call myself, soliciting with all humility and respect the assistance of any one.

“ Oh ! Mr. Rechab, I am so glad, so very happy to see you, though the sight of you makes my wound, my dreadful wound bleed afresh. Oh ! my child, my child, my lovely Emma. Would that I had died for thee, my child.”

“ Mr. Scrapling, I am, you may be sure, exceedingly sorry for your awful bereavement, for I was an eye-witness of the melancholy catastrophe, and I sincerely wish that I were better qualified to console you. But your own good sense will inform you, that incessant lamentation is unavailing, and your knowledge of the scriptures, that we should not mourn as men without hope for them that sleep in God. Your beautiful child died it is true, by what appeared to us a most awful visitation ; but its death was instantaneous. It was no sufferer. It was removed by the almighty power of God in an instant from its earthly house to a house not made with hands. Mr. Scrapling, your beautiful child is in heaven, and has more need to mourn for you than you for it.”

So far I canted by main force, for I never was clever at extempore preaching to the distressed, and in the present instance I was addressing a clergyman of some standing and was myself a youth. But I was obliged to say something, and it turned out better than I expected when I began. My last remark indeed might have been matured by much reflection, so suitable I thought it to his situation, though it was quite an impromptu. It evidently startled him, and convinced me that he thought the sudden and awful death of that little innocent was for his hypocrisy. "Well," thought I, and what is as quick as thought? "I am glad that this is the impression. It will do no harm to my suit. Surely he dares not repeat the offence, through fear of the thunder striking him and showing him his impiety where the fire is never quenched. If he does, I shall be tempted to run away through fear of sharing the same fate."

"Yes, Mr. Rechab, it was a beautiful, a most beautiful child. Oh, what a beautiful child it was. And so innocent, Mr. Rechab,

so very innocent. It thought no wrong, it had not a wicked thought, not a single wicked idea, I do really believe. Oh, what a lovely temper, what a heavenly disposition. It was indeed an angel, a little cherub. Yes, Mr. Rechab, yes, it is, it is in heaven."

The tears poured down his face in torrents, and his emotion shook and convulsed his whole person, and made it impossible for the human mind to doubt the sincerity of his grief, and that it was very deep indeed. Nor did I ever question it.

"God grant, Mr. Scrapling, that you and I and all your flock may be as meet for heaven before we die as was that lovely child."

And here was there a pause, a long pause of profound silence and to me of as deep interest, for I was really melted with pity. It was impossible for a heart of flesh not to pity him. There was a pause—a pause for reflection—for the use of the guide within, godlike reason. And I began now to consult the monitor, and seriously to consider what next should be done.

Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To rust in us unused.

I felt myself in a rather delicate position. Here was Mr. Scrapling so overwhelmed with grief, that his mind at present seemed as if it would reject every other thought than that of his child, and I thought it would seem exceedingly selfish in me, and moreover indecent, ill-bred, gross ignorance of the common forms of polite behaviour, to intrude my own personal concerns upon his more hallowed thoughts. I therefore determined to take my leave as soon as possible without any mention of my own wants. I thought it would be more becoming to postpone the matter, until a few weeks should have cicatrized the wound on his mind. I began therefore to make a few general observations on subjects of no concern to either of us preliminary to my exit, when I heard myself thus accosted by the vicar.

“Have you heard, Mr. Rechab, of a curacy?

eh? yes—of a curacy, or any other situation or employment?”

“I have not.”

“Have you then no expectations, no views of any?”

“None, and I now confess, which you probably suspected, that I came to have a little conversation with you on the subject. I received no answer, Mr. Scrapling, to my applications for the advertisements you gave me.”

“Ah! yes, yes, the advertisements. I remember, I gave you an advertisement or two, and you have not obtained the curacies? You have not been successful, Mr. Rechab, have you? They were disposed of to some acquaintance, yes, some personal applicant or friend on the spot, were they?”

“Upon my word, Mr. Scrapling, you ask for information which I am not able to give you. I know not whether any friend or acquaintance or personal applicant was the successful candidate, or any one else. If there were such curacies advertised, I suspect

they were disposed of prior to my application."

"Oh, there certainly were such: yes, yes, there were such. I showed you the advertisements which I had copied for you."

"Yes, no doubt there were such, but I think I must have applied too late. Do you remember where you saw them?"

"Saw them? Let me see," and he applied his hand to his forehead as if in effort to recall a lost idea. "Where did I see them—I think—upon my word, Mr. Rechab, I really can't—let me see—no—I can't, upon my word, Mr. Rechab, remember just now where I saw them, but it is no consequence, you know; they are past and gone."

"Yes, but I should like to see them. Were they inserted in the 'Christian Remembrancer?' I think you said so, when you gave me them."

"Oh, never mind, Mr. Rechab, never mind, never trouble yourself about them. If I should see them again, I will show you them. Yes, I will take care of them for you."

I had no doubt whatever that he had been

deceiving me by giving me old advertisements, which he knew could be of no service; but I determined to sift the matter thoroughly before I gave way to any intemperance of passion or remark.

God knows, I have never resented the vicar's behaviour as I think in my conscience I ought to have done for the good of others, and above all of himself. I know not why I have not in this instance discharged, what I shall ever esteem an imperative duty. But it may be done, yea, it shall be.

I do not know

Why yet I live to say, "this thing 's to do."

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and
means

To do 't

But it shall be done. I will some time or other tell him my mind freely.

"You have not heard, Mr. Scrapling, since I saw you last, of any curacy being vacant? My father begins to be very much concerned, and I am myself exceedingly unhappy. You see, I have been a considerable time now in want of a

situation and doing all I could to obtain one, but in vain. It is very distressing, Mr. Scrapling. I should be very easily satisfied. I do not want or desire a very valuable appointment ; but to have no employment, nothing to do and no prospect of it, is very distressing and not very creditable. It seems to imply that I have done something for which no one will employ me. I am sure, no such thing has been the case with me."

" Ah ! Mr. Rechab, you will be an honour to the profession, yes, an honour, a burning and a shining light. I very much commend, yea, I applaud with all my heart, the spirit from which you wish to take orders. Yes, you would, Mr. Rechab, you would be very easily satisfied, I am sure you would. You look at the honour, as I always said, you look at the honour. You disregard, you despise, yes, you abhor, my dear Sir, the unrighteous mammon."

I am not alive this moment if my ears did not listen with an intensity enough to split the drum, for the report of a thunder-clap, and I compelled my mind to believe that it was not

thundering and lightening. My eye mechanically looked to the door with the rapidity of thought, and both my eyes winked just as the eyes of those do who are expecting a tremendous blow from behind, and know not the exact moment when it is to come. Anon I expected my eyes opening and my whole man, body and soul, being laid in an instant in the heart of another world. The little beautiful thunder-slain child stood before me, as clearly as when I saw it in the alcove, and anon a black and scorched mass at its father's feet. I held my breath, at the idea of the vicar adding one word more, and with a suppressed voice like those that are afraid to speak, even when there is no one to hear, I said,

“So, so, yes, yes, never mind, another time we will talk of it.” And in truth I knew not what to say nor what I did say. I only knew that I would have given something very considerable to have been out of the house. He saw that I was frightened as if I had seen or expected to see a ghost, my eyes were so agitated, rolling and enlarged, and I have no doubt that

he knew what I was afraid of, but not a muscle of his face betrayed the least emotion. All within him and without was a dead calm : not a breath was there to ruffle the mirror-like placidity of his soul. He looked at me with an unimpassioned eye, in which there was not the least particle of fear, though there was a particle or two of astonishment and something like a faint shadow of a disposition to smile. I sat on a bunch of nettles, and knew not what to say to break the abruptness of my departure.

“Then you will have the goodness to inform me, Mr. Scrapling, if you should hear of any vacant appointment which you think would suit? I cannot express to you how great a favour we should esteem it, I especially, but indeed my whole family.”

“Well, Mr. Rechab, I should be happy, very happy indeed, I cannot express the pleasure I should have, to assist you; but as I told you before, some time since, indeed more than once, curacies are difficult, next to an impossibility, to be obtained. But if any one, I care not who, is likely to obtain one, you are the man.”

“Indeed I find anything but that to be the case, but you will do your best for me. Good day.”

I rose and he with me towards the door, he evidently with a mind not quite nor indeed in the least disburdened. But I was anxious to be gone, for I saw to what his discourse tended and I really was alarmed. So paramount was avarice in his breast over every other passion or consideration, that for the gratification of it, I verily thought he would brave another thunder storm. It made him stoop to what I thought so dishonourable, that there was not an atom of room in my heart for additional contempt.

“Search for the advertisements,” thought I “pshaw, he is not worth the trouble. His covetousness makes him so despicable, base, sordid, and disgusting, and, I think, of necessity wretched, as to leave no consolation to the most vindictive spirit, but that such an object as he was, would disgrace the dignity of revenge.” But as much as he was beneath my contempt, such was my distress at that period, that I was glad to solicit assistance from him,

and so deep and so blinding was my anxiety to meet with a situation, that I had not the discernment which an idiot or blind man would have had, to see, that assistance from him, unless I would serve for years for nothing, was as forlorn a hope as that of a culprit, when the noose has been properly adjusted about his neck, and Jack Ketch is in the act of leaving him nothing to stand upon.

“Then you don’t know of a vacancy anywhere, Mr. Scrapling?”

“Well, let me see, let me see, I believe, at least I have been informed, yes, I have been told that—that—my curate has some thoughts of leaving. Perhaps—perhaps—but you had rather, I believe, Mr. Rechab, you had rather—yes—yes—it would be better for you to commence in some strange place—in some place where you are not known. A prophet, Mr. Rechab, is not honoured, you know, in his own country.”

“If I might have my choice, I should certainly prefer some place at a distance; but a man in my humble situation and possessed of so

few friends, must not be difficult to please. If your curate should leave, I should esteem it a great favour if you would have the goodness to offer me the refusal of the curacy."

I said this, not because I wished to be his curate or would have been upon any consideration, but because I knew the absurdity of soliciting his aid and declining it when offered. Besides, I knew that I could always back out by standing up for stipend. The bare mention of stipend would be sufficient to stop his mouth, if not to choke him.

"Yes, yes, but when I consider, my dear Mr. Rechab, when I begin to weigh the matter well over in my mind, I think, yes, I am sure, it would be better for you, infinitely better, to commence somewhere else. Let me see, I will try to get you a curacy. Yes, I think I can—let me see—just wait for half a moment."

He returned truly in half a moment with a small scrip of paper, with an advertisement copied upon it from some newspaper or periodical. It was clear that he had it copied ready,

and could, if he had chosen, have delivered it into my hands long before.

“I believe, Mr. Rechab, yes, I really believe—somehow or other I feel sure, that you will be—yes—that—that—you will obtain this. You will be successful this time.”

I took the bit of paper into my hand, and concealed as much as possible the indigation and contempt in my countenance by turning my back upon him.

CHAPTER XIV.

I IMMEDIATELY applied for the curacy, and took great pains to indite a respectful letter, couched in gentlemanly language, and containing such circumstances recommendatory of myself, as we all, after much and careful consultation, could imagine to be best calculated for the purpose. I had made so many applications without success, that we were become ridiculously nervous as to the sort of letter I should write, as if my want of success had been owing solely to the diction or expressions I had employed, which no doubt had been anything but the case.

One point of long, tedious and anxious discussion was, whether I should, agreeably to a motion of mine, propose to serve for only a small stipend. My father thought it impious and nothing less than simoniacal, to offer for any stipend less than what should be deemed fair and right in proportion to the value of the living, that is, that if the living were very small, it would be right, certainly not wicked, to accept a very small stipend, but, if it were of great value, the stipend should not be less than what is ordinarily given. But above all things, he shrunk from and reprobated the idea of serving for less, one single shilling less, for the sake of a title. This he thought no better than purchasing orders.

I, my mother and brother had only one opinion, that it was impious to serve for nothing, but right and proper for a small stipend, whatever might be the value of the living. He thought that it was more impious to serve for nothing than for a stipend too small, but that the impiety of the latter was as great as the stipend was too small; so that, according to

his calculation, I ought never to have accepted a curacy or taken orders, if the stipend had been one single shilling, less than what he thought fair and just. It is clear that, in many instances, the calculation must have been exceedingly difficult or rather impossible. At last it was agreed that the stipend should not be mentioned, but made a subject of consideration afterwards.

It was immediately folded up, sealed and committed to the post. I should have to go some two hundred miles from home, and, considering the state of my father's health, I should probably see him no more in the flesh. I took up a volume of Demosthenes, which was lying on the table, and the first sentence which caught my eye was the following: "First, then, Athenians, these our affairs must not be thought desperate; no, though their situation seems entirely deplorable. For the most shocking circumstance of all our past conduct is really the most favourable to our future expectations. And what is this? That our total indolence hath been the cause of all our present difficulties.

For were we thus distressed, in spite of every vigorous effort which the honour of our state demands, there were then no hope of recovery."

Whatever failing I or my friends had, a superstitious belief in signs or prodigies or any arts of divination was not amongst them, at least I had always thought so; but all superstitious people perhaps think all others superstitious but themselves, as many in liquor think themselves the only sober people in the company. But whether there was such a particular soft place in my head or not, I certainly could not but think, that the sentence or two so casually turned up and so selecting themselves for exclusive notice, ought to read us a lesson of very great use, to me in particular.

At the expiration of about a week, I received a double letter, which I doubted not had reference to my application. Of course I had double postage to pay, no trifle in those days. The circumstance of its being double set us all on the tiptoe of expectation; we thought it a proof that the blessing of God had been with

my letter and had given it success. What a pleasurable hope played about our hearts, smiled on our lips and sparkled in our eyes, and made our hearts dance for joy. What a curious, indescribable, but blissful sensation our hope produced! Hope, I mean deferred, which maketh the heart sick, but when it cometh, is a tree of life. This sensation is the opposite of sickness and what is that? My heart knocked at my breast as if it would have leaped out of its receptacle, its domicile, its throne, and my hand trembled so that I could not for the life of me hold the letter. I twice let it fall, and when it lay on the floor I thought I should never be able to pick it up again. If such were the difficulty I found in retaining the slippery, eel-like thing in my grasp, not that it was at all like an eel except that I could not hold it, what must have been the task of breaking the seal or rather wafer and of unfolding the paper. My hand shook so, that I thought I could never have introduced my thumb under the envelope for the purpose of separating or tearing off the parts attached by the wafer, and when I had

proceeded so far, my agitation seemed to increase in proportion to the gratification of our hopes.

“Dear me, Jonadab,” said my mother, whose patience was never very great, and who now began to be fairly out of breath, “dear me, what a very long time you are. I am sure you must be very much agitated. Let me open it.”

“Give it me,” said my brother, “I can open it quick enough.”

Reader, did you ever buy a ticket in the lottery, and, being of an imaginative mind, dream night and day of getting a £30,000 prize from Goodluck and Co., and when you received their letter, (supposing you to live in the country,) announcing your fate, do you remember with what trepidation and what sensation, which you have not words to pourtray, you opened the important epistle which was to enable you to ride in your *carosse*, and found a—blank. It was singular that we did not perceive, before we opened the letter, that it had come from the general post-office; but our agitation, I suppose, shook the very senses out of us. Its being a double letter caused us to

think, that it contained a nomination to be forwarded to the Bishop, whereas it was neither more nor less than my own letter returned.

And what was the meaning of this? Had the villainous vicar been so iron-hearted, that he could invent an advertisement and offer it to me as what he had seen? How came I not to demand a sight of the publication, in which it was inserted? But there is no doubt he has been imposing upon us, and making a mockery of our distress. And is this a clergyman, a vicar? It is impossible to conceive the indignation which enraged me. I wished to go immediately and tell him my mind freely, and instantly to demand an explanation, to speak on the subject to all the respectable inhabitants, and to write to the postmaster of the place to whom the letters of application were ordered to be addressed. But my father stood in my way. He said passion was madness, that there must be some mistake, and that the vicar was as fallible as any other man. My mother, who was naturally as suspicious as myself, said, "it

is impossible, that the vicar or any other man could have the heart to do such a thing: it puts us to great expense and anxiety and disappointment, without being any benefit to him."

"He wants," said I, "to weary out my patience, to make me despair of obtaining a curacy and a title, and so glad to accept his title for a three years' gratuitous service. I understand him perfectly well. I have done so from the very first. He cares not what expense and distress he puts us to, so he can get me to be his curate for nothing. I have also a suspicion that he wishes to sell me some one of his perpetual curacies. He thinks my father has got a little money and he would like to finger it. But I will search for these advertisements, and, if I cannot find them, I will insist upon his showing where he met with them. He has behaved as ill as he can, and I will show him no quarter."

I went to the booksellers one after another with the speed of vengeance, to all without exception that the town could afford to main-

tain. I examined every periodical they had, in which advertisements are wont to be published, but could find nothing I sought for. They had indeed only recent numbers, and his advertisements, if any such had ever been, must have been of much remoter date. To the library, therefore, I posted next. I was not a subscriber nor was my father, but I knew the librarian, and he had no hesitation to grant me the favour I requested. I searched until I was tired of turning over leaves, and began to despair of success, when the identical advertisements turned themselves up to my view. Such had certainly been inserted, which was more than I had expected, especially in respect to the last; but the heartless chicanery of the vicar was, in my opinion, just the same as if they had not been inserted. The last had been published half a year within about ten days, and the preceding one, when I applied for it, was of about two months standing.

Now he knew that such advertisements had been disposed of long before I applied, and that

my writing for them was neither more nor less than a waste of paper, time, trouble, money and patience, to say nothing of the depressing effect of disappointment. Every disappointment was followed by despair or a close approximation to it, and every one knows what a painful state of mind that is. He was insulting the distressed, trampling on the fallen, mocking and aggravating our sorrows. I would have visited him immediately, but my friends would not permit. They insisted on my waiting, until my passion and excitement should have subsided, urging as one reason that if he would not be a friend, he might be an enemy, which, in our present exigencies it was not prudent for us to make him. I was fully sensible that passion does not do things in the most prudent way, and saw the propriety therefore of waiting until I could do things more coolly.

I did wait. But such were my grief and vexation, that I could not rest without some sedative, and to the pipe therefore I betook myself again, and, I am sorry to add, to the

glass also. Such a misfortune is it to have once begun a bad habit. If I had never smoked and never drunk to drive away care, I should not have thought of doing so now ; that sort of relief would not have entered my mind.

CHAPTER XV.

I WAS so *ennuyé* that I knew not how to spend my time, and as there was a Thursday night lecture at the parish church, I thought I would make it a rule, so long as I should be at home, to attend it every week, in order to get quit of a little of that time which hung so heavy on my hands, if not for a more important and praiseworthy purpose. There was also another reason, which had a good deal of concern in inducing me to make this resolution. I had now been a long time at home, wanting and inquiring for a situation and unable to obtain

one. This of course was no secret in the town, and consequently for some time back I had been exceedingly loath from shame to show myself at church on a Sunday, because people took a marked notice of me, and I had become a very popular topic for conversation of no creditable a character.

Everybody, even numbers whom I did not know personally, knew exactly how long I had been at home. They made it a subject of their frequent calculation, and some even made bets that I should not be off, as they expressed themselves, before the commencement of another year. Some pretended to have heard, that, on account of some misconduct, my college could not conscientiously give me the requisite testimonials for the Bishop, and that this was kept a profound secret out of compassion and respect for my father. Some said I was a father without ever having had a wife, many that I had never taken a degree, and not a few that I had been expelled. They concluded therefore that, not being able to procure College testimonials, it was necessary that I should wait at home

three years before the clergy in this neighbourhood could recommend me to the Bishop, testimonials for so long a period being required. Having for these reasons absented myself from church on a Sunday for a considerable time past, I was anxious to make up for it by going regularly to the lecture, when the audience was smaller and less respectable.

To the lecture I went, and was very much surprised with the prayer, an extempore effusion as usual of Mr. Scrapling's, before the sermon. From first to last, it was nothing but an earnest supplication to God in behalf of those intended and preparing for holy orders. He prayed with far more than ordinary fervour, that if they were waiting for ordination and could not find an opportunity, could not obtain a curacy or title, could not find a place in the vineyard of the Lord, He would enable them by his grace to wait with patience.

I could not refrain from covering my eyes with my hands, and I did really think, as I pressed them to my forehead, that the lightning penetrated to the sensorium, and again that there

was a thick and awful darkness. He ceased, however, and I was exceedingly glad of it, and ventured again to behold the light of heaven. The brilliant setting sun gleamed magnificently through the painted glass, and it was a most splendid evening. The preacher closed his address at the throne of mercy with a petition, that no hireling or lover of filthy lucre, by which he meant no one who would not serve a curacy for absolute nothing, might be admitted to the sacred office, and then, without being hurled by the red right hand of the Almighty thunderer to the miseries of the lost, as I thought he ought to have been, he quietly proceeded to the sermon.

That his prayer was personal to me, no man who understood the circumstances and heard it, could entertain a doubt, and there were persons there who, as well as I, applied it to me. I was the only one then in the parish, who had been at the university, wished to take orders and had waited long for the opportunity. Knowing, as I did, what an instrument he wanted to make of me for the gratification of

his own love, of what he called filthy lucre, and how he had behaved to me in reference to the advertisements, I sat and listened to his discourse with a heart very unsuited, I confess, to the place and the occasion. I thought him the most wicked wretch I had ever heard of, and, on my own account, personally was so enraged, that I had the heart to have done him some grievous bodily harm.

Yet I was obliged to behave towards him apparently with great respect. I durst not resent his deceitful and cruel treatment. He was the vicar of the parish, and, without his signature, it was not probable I should ever be able to offer myself for ordination. My indignation then I was forced to repress, my heart to cloak with a countenance of much seeming veneration and esteem. I maintain that I was compelled thus to temporise by the most forcible and painful means. What an Herculean task ! My heart was inflamed, yea, it burst with choler, yet was I compelled to conceal it, and more, to seem to be tranquil, cool, unmoved, perfectly satisfied, well pleased. He

saw, when we were in church, indeed observed during his horrible prayer, for I saw him do it, how he screwed up my feelings to the utmost tension of which they were susceptible. Though I knew that I was anything but composed, though I could feel my heart beating like some creature exerting itself to the utmost to extricate itself from a cage or prison, yet I determined to have an interview with him immediately after service, and had the greatest confidence that I could command my blood. It was indeed running mountains high, and yet was I sure that the storm would obey me.

I was extremely anxious to see him just then, because I had some suspicion that he had observed my look, and could see, if he had eyes to see with, that it was that of a fierce, exasperated hyena, and I thought that, if I could only terrify him, without committing myself by any ungentlemanlike behaviour, it might operate to my advantage in his future conduct towards me. My curiosity also was irresistible to know what excuse he would make respecting the advertisements. Patiently, therefore, did I wait

until the service was finished, and I watched him leave the vestry where he had disrobed, quit the church, and hie to his own house. I watched every look and motion, and fancied that on emerging from the church portal, he hastened home on the wings of fear: he certainly slammed the door after as if to shut out danger or mischief.

But if his speed was winged with alarm, mine was with vengeance. My hand was upon the knocker the instant he had closed the door. Whether he had noticed my approach or not, I know not; perhaps he did not, because, though I pursued with my utmost speed, I did so with the stealthy pace of the cat. Indeed I had been playing the cat ever since the prayer, and my feelings suffered me not to be aware of it. He could not have got a yard from the door, before I sent an echo through the lobby, which would have startled, I think, any ordinary nerves. I asked if the vicar was within: he could not be denied. I was shown into the drawing-room and there he was alone.

“Oh, Mr. Rechab, I am very glad, most

happy indeed to see you. I was just thinking of you. I was just wondering if you had got a title."

"And did you expect that I should have got one by this?"

"Expect—why—expect? I don't know as to expect, but I was wondering if you had."

"Would you have thought it a wonder, if I had?"

"Wonder—why? wonder—why? As to that I am not able to say; but I thought it not impossible. No, not impossible."

"You thought it was barely no more than not impossible. You thought there was not the most distant probability; that there was only a possibility. Is that what I am to understand you to say?"

"Yes, yes. It was not impossible. Such a thing was not impossible. I could know no more."

"But you did not think, Mr. Scrapling, that there was the smallest conceivable probability. Did you, or did you not?"

"Upon my word, Mr. Rechab, I don't—really

I don't understand you. You seem to ask, yes, you interrogate with very great warmth, with uncommon anxiety and earnestness. I hope, Mr. Rechab, I hope that nothing, that no offence, yes, that no offence is intended."

"Mr. Scrapling, I only ask a civil question; and a civil question, you know, deserves a civil answer."

"But, but—my dear, my dear Mr. Rechab—it is, it is, such, such a very, very odd question—yes, a very, very odd question."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Scrapling, I beg permission to ask you, with the greatest respect, which I hope will be always due, and always paid by me to you, as the vicar of this parish. Did you think that there was the most distant probability that I had obtained a title? The question is very simple, intelligible, and not impertinently inquisitive about secrets, which I have no business to know. I mean no offence, Mr. Scrapling, and therefore, beg you will have the goodness to answer me without hesitation. Did you think there was the smallest probability of my having obtained a title?"

“Upon my word—really, Mr. Rechab, I don’t know. I cannot think why you should ask such a question. What matters it—of what concern is it, what I thought?”

“I see plainly, Mr. Scrapling, that you are determined not to answer the question. I therefore ask you, did you think there was the least probability of success, in my application for the curacy of which you gave me the last advertisement?”

“Upon my word, Mr. Rechab, you appear to be—I think I had better, I think I had better—yes, it would be better to ring the bell for the servant.”

“Did you think I had the least chance for the curacy in the last advertisement?”

“Mr. Rechab, you appear to be—the least chance — upon my word—yes, you appear to be—very, very warm—the least chance? it was impossible—utterly impossible for me to know.”

“What was the date of the last advertisement? I will say nothing of the others at present.”

“ I never—the date ?—let me see—the date ? I never thought of—no—it never entered my head—to notice it.”

“ Then you mean to say that you never knew the date of it ?”

“ I—I—yes—I do.”

“ And what sort of a heart must you have had to put us, a poor family, to the expense and trouble of applying for a curacy, advertised you knew not when, might be, for aught you know, half-a-year before ? When I received the advertisements into my hands from yours, I took it for granted, how could I do otherwise, that you knew they were only just published, and consequently, were prompt application made, that there was some chance of obtaining them ? How could I think they were half-a-year old ? Your behaviour has been extremely cruel, unbecoming that Christian tenderness which should pervade the breast of every disciple of the compassionate Redeemer. You excited expectations which you were sure would not be realized, and foresaw, you must have done, the unhappiness which would spring from our disappointment.

If you had no feeling or regard for me, you might, you ought to have had some compassion for my aged and unhappy parents.”

“ Really, Mr. Rechab—upon my word, Mr. Rechab—I am very sorry—exceedingly sorry—if I have caused you—yes, you or your friends, any uneasiness. But I knew not—it was impossible for me to know—whether you had any—yes, the least chance.”

“ Did you not know, that the last advertisement which you put into my hands, had been inserted in the ‘ Christian Remembrancer ’ half-a-year within eight or ten days prior to the day on which you gave it me ? ”

“ Knew—knew—let me see—yes, yes, yes—I remember—yes—I did know that—but—but—you might have—yes—you might have succeeded nevertheless, you know.”

“ You did know then ? Why, you have already said that you did not. But I had no doubt of it. I was sure that you knew. And how could you think of giving me such old advertisements ? How could you have the heart to practise such a cruel imposition ? ”

“Imposition—imposition? how can you say so? I had nothing—nothing whatever—but a good design. I wished—I was anxious—to assist you. What inducement—yes—what motive could I have for imposing upon you?”

I knew that the altercation would come to this. I had foreseen it some time, though not when I pursued him into the house, for then passion, my eyes “in dim suffusion veil’d.” I could see nothing at that time: I was stone-blind. He had now asked me a question, which I could have answered, for I knew the proper reply, but I durst not. I could not tell him, “Sir, you have been wanting all this time to engage me as your own curate to serve several years for a title, and you thought I would not consent to such an unreasonable and wicked bargain, until I had been humbled by long expectations, many fruitless trials, many disappointments, even to the very threshold of despair.” For if I had done so, he would have denied it flatly and with every plausibility of truth on his side.

He had never offered me his title, which hundreds would have esteemed a great favour, who would have rejected with abhorrence all offer of purchase, nor had he ever been thought by the mass of his parishioners to give his curates less than £100 per annum. That was what he had always unblushingly affirmed, and even asserted when he might have evaded the falsehood. Only a few individuals knew that he gave nothing. He might have said to me, nor could I have disproved his assertion, that he would not have given me his title, had I requested him, so far was he from desiring me to accept it or compelling me by dishonourable manoeuvres. I was struck dumb. I had anticipated this result and dreaded it during our dispute.

“ Well, Mr. Scrapling, it is strange to me, if you were not sure that those advertisements were too old to be of any service to me, and that my application for them could only be unnecessary trouble and expense. Besides, you ought to have told me, that the curacies had been advertised half-a-year since, and that

consequently the probability of their having been filled up was very great, but that there was some very small chance, and thus have left it to my own discretion whether or not I would write about them. This I cannot for the life of me refrain from saying that I think you would have done, had your intentions towards me been sincere and honourable. But of course you will have the goodness to offer me no more of such advertisements.”

“Oh! Mr. Rechab, you know—you cannot but know—that—that—it cannot be any benefit to me, to offer you—yes, to put myself to any trouble. I thought—it was natural I should think—that I was doing you—a—kindness. Others—many—very many—in this very parish—would think so.”

I was obliged to pull in my horns. He had me in his mesh, and I found it to my sorrow afterwards. I could only expose myself to ridicule and worse, contempt, the indignation of the whole parish. He afterwards made me thus despised and indeed abhorred for my ingratitude, as he called it, though, if the truth

had been spoken, the name should have been cruelty, his own cruelty and imposture. Though I knew therefore that he had been playing me the foulest trick, the recollection of which has ever set my blood boiling, yet was I obliged at present to appear grateful to him, which I did while the tears of vexation scalded and blistered my averted face.

I was now as anxious to leave Mr. Scrapling's house, as I had been to pursue him into it, indeed to leave him and it for ever and a day longer. But when he saw me succumb, as one fairly worsted and who has need to have his face suffused with a blush, he affected considerable dissatisfaction, as if he had been by me not very honourably treated. He turned the tables upon me.

"I am sure, Mr. Rechab—yes, quite sure—that—I have been a very great friend—yea—none would have befriended you—as—as I have done. I am sorry—with—with all my heart—that you are not—not—not—better pleased. You appeared — really— really—were you offended?"

I had submitted, and kept a very tight rein over my rising choler for some minutes, knowing the worse than folly, the unfair advantage he would take, of my giving way to passion. But now, when he affected the aggrieved person, as if I had done him an injury, or offered him an insult, I found my passion pull at my heart-strings, beyond the power of all the reins in the world to hold it in. Snaffle and bridle, and curb, and all other expedients for restraining the most powerful full-blood, would have been smoking flax, burnt thread. But then my passion roared in full cry.

“ You don’t approve of a hireling, Mr. Scrapling ? No, not you.”

“ Oh ! Mr. Rechab, you covet—you—you—long for—the honour.”

“ The labourer is not worthy of his hire, Mr. Scrapling ? not he.”

“ I think—I think—”

“ That a curate should serve for nothing ; that he should be quite disinterested, and work for the honour.”

“ Exactly—ex—”

“ You said so in your prayer in the church, this evening, did you not ?”

“ I did—I did—Mr. Re—”

“ Did you ever hear it thunder ?”

“ Sir ?”

“ Did you ever hear it thunder, and see it lighten ?”

“ My dear Mr. Rechab—you know—”

“ Did you ever see the heavens as black at noon as ever you saw the blackest midnight, and the lightning flash and hear the thunder roar, as if the world had been dashed in pieces ?”

“ For God’s sake, for God’s sake, Mr. Rechab—”

“ Did you pray, said you ? Did you not execrate even in the house of God the poor curate who labours for his daily bread ? Oh ! how could the thunders sleep after having blasted that beautiful, innocent child ? Where is your child, Mr. Scrapling ? Where is your child, Sir ?”

And I was instantly out of his house, and had banged to the door, the noise of which seemed to be the finale to my own vociferation,

which still rung in his ears. I was in the street. I was under the canopy of heaven, the blue ethereal of the blessed. I breathed more freely, but still with the inflation of vindictive lungs, and I strode towards my father's house with the strength of a giant. I strode away with a mind anything but dejected, for passion gave it the elasticity, the spring of the tiger, and I heard as I hurried along :

“Is that a parson?”

“No,” replied another voice, “not yet—only wants to be. Nobody will employ him; he is too bad to be a parson; they may make him a soldier.”

This was the whole of the above dialogue that I heard, for of course I was too proud to stop and listen; but it was evidently spoken in an elevation of voice intended distinctly to reach my ears. It was between two hard labouring men, plebeians as a pompous aristocrat would call them, *profanum vulgus*, operatives in the neologism of Lord Brougham and Vaux, the *canaille* in the dialect across the water. They threw the insult after me, and I do assure you,

it hit me. My ears were too acute, sore, and sensitive to be made of mere flesh and blood ; they must have been formed of some spiritual material, for angels' ears could not have drunk the above words with greater thirst, and without losing a single drop, or tithe of a drop, if by drops I may be allowed to represent words. Yes, I heard. They need not have stretched their lungs as they did : a whisper would have overtaken me. Yes, I heard, and the words sunk into my soul deeper and deeper as my mind dwelt upon them, until they were written there as indelibly as the sins of sinners in the book of life.

CHAPTER XVI.

As soon as I reached home, I bolted myself into the small apartment like a debtor pursued by the harpies of the law. What cared I for the world, or propriety, or happiness, or reputation, or life, or death. Had I considered for a moment, it would have flashed on my mind with the brilliance of a sunbeam, and the terrors of eternal wrath, that "every cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil." I should have called out, or my fears would, "reputation, reputation, reputation;" but could I consider? Could I weigh in the casuist's nicely adjusted

and accurately poised scales, the obliquity or rectitude to a grain of what I was doing? Could I even think, barely cogitate for an instant on the subject? Such at that time was my state of mind, that I thought then, and have often since, that I could as soon have squared the circle, or told the longitude to a second without calculation. My mind was not my own. It was seized, clutched, stolen, murdered by the felonious idea of my treatment. It lay within my bosom, slain with a thousand gashes; it was the target of a thousand daggers. Who, said I, can be surprised if I pour upon it anything, no matter what, which falls in my way, so I think it sanative?

In plain prose, I never thought an instant of the impropriety or danger, but mixed and quaffed and should have done, had it been prussic acid.

In short, reader, I was tipping, and you see by what degrees, by what stealthy, imperceptible pace, I was making myself a solitary sot.

I have before repeated a remark, not my own, for it is probably as old as the world, viz., that

man is in a great measure the creature of circumstances. You have seen how my mind was worked up into a fever by the vilest hypocrisy and cruelty, and that too by a reverend pastor, who ought to have had more respect for his flock or any part of it, I will not say who ought to have known better, for better he did know. You have seen also the disappointment, with which my juvenile soul was assailed, a disappointment which has ever been thought by competent judges the severest with which the mind of man can be tried.

I commenced toying gently, cautiously at first, as one afraid of treading upon a man-trap or spring-gun, but the rubicon was passed. Having a second time this evening comforted my heart, I took the alarm, serious, terrible alarm relinquished the pipe and glass both, and hastened into the open air. Again, said I for the thousandth time, if I mean to live, I must breathe the unconfined winds of heaven, and I rushed into the valley, the noble, majestic, magnificent expanse between the hills, which vied in breadth with the vault of heaven. I walked quick, as one in haste, in reality

to leave my thoughts behind me, as if by change of locality and scenery, I should doff my old thoughts which were the vulture at my liver, and, though it must be confessed that man can outrun anything but himself, yet will a removal to a fresh place beget a change in the current of your thoughts.

I knew it, I felt it, thousands of times, for my grief had been a terrible annoyance but also very fertile in expedients for relief. The mind seems to make the same effort to throw off and get quit of its peculiar complaints, its griefs, its vexations, its torturing passions, that nature makes to throw off any disease from the body by the discharge of offending humours, and as medicine is an assistance to the body, so change of situation is a powerful alterative and relief to the sick of soul.

I walked as if I had been in excellent spirits, and indeed endeavoured to be so, and the very apéry of vivacity, the very affectation of cheerfulness, had a mercurial effect on the mind. I walked, not down the valley, but to the apex of the hill which, being continued for miles, formed an

inclosure of the valley, and I went in an oblique direction, not through the pathless sward, but on a footpath which for centuries had conducted from Swallowbeck to Cowley, and when I had mounted the brow of the cliff, I felt the volatility which at the outset I had affected, had gradually grown into real, heart-felt, unsophisticated joy. I was happy, satisfied, well pleased, why, wherefore, at what, I knew no more than the antipodes. I knew that the cheefulness would be very evanescent, but I was really surprised at its existence. I am sure I had every reason to be unhappy, and yet was I high, elevated in soul as the mountain on which I stood.

The sun was just receding behind a hamlet of considerable magnitude on the opposite side of the valley, of which I had as complete a view where I stood, as sailors in the Mediterranean have of Algiers. The houses ran up to the summit, and the sun was among the chimnies, fast sinking in the most sublime flood of glorious light. The heavens around him were clothed in crimson, which no artist but He who hung out the heavens like a curtain could ever pourtray.

I stood gazing as in days gone by on the luminary and his curtain of crimson and every other colour combined and interwoven, and my temporary, unaccountable joy mellowed into a sober sadness. I was not unhappy, but joy and sorrow in my soul seemed to kiss each other, and for once to draw up articles of peace. I was not happy, I was not miserable.

How often have I feasted my eyes and soul with the sublimity of yon setting orb from this very spot ! What idea of heaven, of its visible magnificence at least, after this life is over, can I conceive better than what the spectacle before me presents ? and if it be so beautiful, so grand, so awful, and far more doubtless it is, what signify the misfortunes man is heir to here ? He will soon not even be able to recollect them. The dream will have left no trace behind. Would that I could fix my heart upon that rock of ages, to which no cares, no griefs, or insults can reach. "He builds too low who builds beneath the skies." But here for a time we must live, here the body must be, but at the same time cannot the soul be in heaven ? Though chained

to this perishable tabernacle for a few years, yet can she make, it seems, heaven the depository of his wealth, and the poorest in earth may be rich in heaven.

I began to be gravely resolved that I would not in future let my peace of soul be so vulnerable to the annoyances of the world, but endeavour to oppose religion as her shield for protection, and I did really think that nothing merely earthly would be able to plunge me again into such an abyss of wretchedness as that in which I had recently been. I was calm and not only resolved to continue so, but was firmly of opinion that I should. Thank God, said I, there is such a thing as religion to medicine the afflicted soul, and to protect it from the tempests of passion to which it is naturally exposed. And I heard a conversation passing between a gentleman and a lady on the other side of the hedge, high and thick, which separated me from them; and as the voices drew nearer, they arrested my attention as having been familiar to my ears. They were those of Jane and De

Witt, my only love and my happy, ever-blessed rival.

Yes, I knew that voice—that sweet, subdued voice. How I supported myself I know not, but the blood fled from my face, my eyes were expanded and dim, and my lips apart as if something unearthly and most terrific had stood before me. I saw them, but they saw not me, and I heard them—heard them? Every whisper of Jane's was trumpet-tongued. The very spot they trod on was to me hallowed ground, for it was there she first solemnly plighted her troth to me, and sealed the promise with the impress of her lips. That spot had been heaven to me once, and was witness now to my irreparable wretchedness. I was rivetted to the place, an immovable, living, and only just living monument, as if the hand of death had been upon me. The winds had carried away the vow which she had made to me. They were walking very slowly, a pace requisite perhaps for her then state; but having arrived at the very spot, she proposed, in a faint and scarcely articulate voice, that they should stop and look about them.

Stop they did, but her eyes seemed to look inward, not on the magnificent sky before them. She looked upon empty space, while he spoke to ears hermetically sealed to his idle garrulity. She heard him not, his words died in the mountain breeze, as had done her own far more solemn words addressed to me long before. Her face had the sickly hue of a corroded heart. Yes, there was a secret, which preyed upon that heart, and undermined, and sapped, and destroyed its happiness. The sun, as I have said, was just sinking behind the hamlet, and it was just so, when she, on the very spot where she now stood, made me the promise which I thought as sacred as if made at the altar. My father's house was visible from where we stood, and, after the engagement ratified by the seal of love, we had descended into the valley towards my home. I now heard her husband accost her in the following words, as they gazed on the quickly disappearing god of light.

“How often, after the labours of the day, have I walked up to this knoll on which we

now stand, and watched yonder magnificent luminary set as he is now doing. Were you ever here before ?”

Her eyes were fixed on the brilliant orb now nearly out of sight, in an abstracted gaze, and her lips moved not in reply, yet his words took hold of her understanding. Yes, she heard him, that the increasing paleness of her lips sufficiently assured me, but she spoke not:

“ I have often hence cast my eyes around, as the sun descended, and observed the beautiful evening sky gilded by the vermillion beams of the sun, and then looked down in the valley, yonder where stands Mr. Rechab’s house, and remarked how much farther advanced were the shades of evening. Look, Jane, at yon house, how dark and gloomy it looks compared to the brightness and splendour, and cheerfulness of the hamlet on the brow of the opposite hill.”

And having thus expressed himself, he printed a kiss on her lips, those lips which had sworn fidelity to me for ever, and then once more I beheld her eyes and drank deeper of affliction, but

she spoke not, nor moved. Her face, her lips, were the sickly hue of sorrow, of a withered heart, but she turned not.

“Look, Jane, at the contrast; look at Mr. Rechab’s house in the valley. But you seem very pale, my dear, are you unwell?”

At these words she was roused to something like attention, and she turned towards the object pointed out to her, but seemed afraid to catch it with her eye, and to avoid it she turned rather further, towards where I stood, and through the dense foliage my form, my features, my countenance, marred as they were in comparison of what they were when she knew them, arrested her notice. She knew me, and I fled down the valley with the strides of a maniac in haste, and I really thought that my heart was broken. I heard a faint shriek, the shriek of one heart-broken like myself, little above a whisper, but it was a shriek of agonizing sorrow. I turned not to look, for I could not give the medicine for a sick mind, which I required for my own. Soon, very soon was I

in my father's house, and in the confined little cabin which I had so recently quitted.

It was growing late, indeed I cannot conceive what could induce them to walk out so far from her father's, where they were on a visit, at so late an hour ; unless, as I have always suspected, it was in compliance with a proposal of Jane's. How soon was my sober sadness dispersed, and my mind agitated again, like the troubled ocean, by a sudden and most violent gust. Man makes resolutions, and is not sure that he shall keep them for an hour.

"It is impossible," said I, "for me to abstain from the habits which I abhor, until I shall have been removed, by a merciful Providence, to some other part of the world, and until time shall have obscured the recollection of my misfortunes, and I will make no more resolutions of amendment. God himself must see, that, at present, my reformation is impracticable, and He is too benevolent and righteous to demand of me impossibilities. In my present position, virtue is an idle name."

Again the wreaths of smoke ascended in rapid succession, and the glass contained another devil. I had now no objection, not the least perceptible spark of an objection, to the pipe and the glass. I did not think that God himself would or could object, knowing the constitution of my soul, that it could only stand a certain brunt, and then must necessarily yield. Again did the burning liquid warm my heart, but to no more than a reasonable warmth, as I thought, would I submit. Again did I exercise my faculties of ratiocination on the point, and, after carefully syllogizing, concluded that, though not lawful in all cases, in my present a recourse to these means of solace was allowable, if not commendable. I am permitted to cheer my heart with the gift of Providence, and if once, more than once, and if at all, I soon proceeded to infer that I might, to a considerable extent, though not excessive. No, I did not think that I had a right to get drunk, to swallow until my head and eyes should be no longer capable of discharging their respective functions ; but I did think that I had more than a right, that it was indeed imperative on me to

make myself cheerful, for the dispersion of that *ennui*, and often far worse, that discontent, that spirit of repining, which, in the least degree I knew to be excessively sinful.

In my conversation with my friends, I recounted the whole history of my attendance at the lecture, of the vicar's undoubted personalities in his prayer, of the general notice of it taken by the congregation, and of the surprise expressed in their countenances, and I observed that I had no doubt it would spread all over the parish, for that it was clearly understood by every one present. More particularly did I lay before them my interview with the vicar, "extenuating nothing, nor setting down aught in malice," and it was acknowledged by all, my father not excepted, that he had certainly been enacting the part of a most unfeeling impostor, and that I should never make my shadow darken his door again. After, indeed, the manner in which my rage and indignation had vented themselves, this was thought necessary and unavoidable. Whether he had ever been my friend or enemy—he was now, at all events, not my friend, perhaps a

mortal foe ; but whatever might be his power and ingenuity in the latter capacity, we were sure that he could not stab deeper, or with a more poisoned weapon.

Never shall I forget the length and depth of the grief he caused us. I knew nothing he could have done, which would have produced equal mortification. It is not always what the world thinks the greatest injury, which inflicts the greatest pain. Well, we that evening commended ourselves, our affairs, our souls, our bodies, our estates, our all, to the consideration and care of the Universal Parent, with far more than our usual earnestness, making known to Him what He knew better than we could tell Him, our wants, our sorrows, and begging His protection and providential care, who catereth for the sparrow.

CHAPTER XVII.

I SLEPT not that night. Not a minute could I prevail upon my senses to compose themselves to rest, though I endeavoured to calm them with the lullaby of a nurse to her infant, and laboured to my utmost to exclude from the sensorium every image, every idea which might engage their attention, and tickle their fancy: it was all abortive. They were all five broad, staring awake, and more than alive, painfully, agonizingly quick. Can he who is tortured by the rack, until a hair's breath intervenes between him and death, be

said to be asleep, or more than awake? So was I. The sun rose with all the sublimity with which I had seen him go to rest, and the return of his brilliancy set before my eyes the magnificence of his orb the night before, and my once betrothed and eternally beloved, and I heard her shriek, far more piercing than before, and my limbs were impelled into motion, as when I descended from the cliff, and sleep was as far from my eyes as the east is from the west.

In my forlorn situation I have no consolation but one: things could not be worse; so said I, but the thought rushed into my mind, the instant the words had escaped my lips, that my father might die before I met with employment, or if not, be completely incapacitated, and so need support, instead of being able to afford it. But said I again, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;" He caters for the sparrow; every living creature opens its mouth wide, and He fills it. I have too little faith: I am worth more than many sparrows. And new grief had anti-stimulated so far as to produce a

revulsion in my favour, and to become a stimulant, and I felt something like the consolation of a culprit sentenced to die, whose moments are just numbered, and whose only solace is that the bitterness of death will soon be past.

It now came into my mind, perhaps at the suggestion of some tantalizing demon, that I should probably be soon receiving a letter from the tutors of my college. Hope from all other quarters had been cut off, and now in hunting about, my mind naturally turned her eyes to Oxford, from which only there now seemed to be an avenue or vista of expectation. I had written to them more than once, and surely, so strongly as I had depicted my disappointment and griefs, and those of my family, and my utter despair of assistance from elsewhere, they would, I concluded, offer me the next appointment thrown in their way, if it were only to stop the dogged perseverance of my importunities. I knew they often had it in their power, for they had frequently, during my under-graduateship, been most urgently soli-

cited as a great favour, to recommend a youth of their own college, and had been more than once unable to find a man who would accept the post they offered.

“No doubt,” thought I, “they will be offering me soon, what no other man will deem worth his acceptance, though it will be worth mine, if it be worth anything.” And this single possibility, for probability, in truth it was not, administered laudanum to my brain, and my eyelids closed when they should have finally opened for the day. Sleep came, but not that completely oblivious sleep, which is the most perfect representative of death, and during which the soul slumbers as well as the body. The various scenes and events of the preceding day and evening, with many alterations and additions, passed in review before me like the images of a phantasmagoria.

There was an immense ball of red, glaring light before me, and I gazed on it intensely, and mourned and lamented for the reminiscences associated with it, though weep I could not. Again I was with my beloved and we vowed

eternal love and fidelity, that nothing but death should divide us, and again our lips sealed the engagement, and I was happy. I should marry my Jane, and know no disappointment. And methought she was happy, and smiled upon me with her once beautiful, celestial countenance.

Further, she held in her hand a letter. I could see it as plainly as I ever saw anything in my life with mortal eyes. I examined it in my own hand, I felt it as well as saw it. The crest of the impression on the sealing-wax was a certain bird. I read, too, the postmark in printed characters: it was "Oxford." And I said, "this is from Oxford, and I know the handwriting of the address: it is Mr. Hireton's. He was tutor when I was there, and he fraudulently deprived me of a fellowship. By way of compensation, and to ease his conscience, he now offers me a curacy or some other situation. I shall be taken away from you for a time." She observed that that was its purport, that she had been desired to put it into my hand, and that the letter-carrier waited for the postage.

I broke open the seal with great exultation,

as if it had been a prize of £30,000 from Goodluck and Co., and I smiled and was in high glee, but no sooner did the writing within meet my eye, than the characters faded as it were into a mist, and became invisible. My eyes were now opened, and I was really awake, and lo ! not Jane, but my beloved mother, and father, and brother, whose griefs had always been mine, and mine theirs, stood before me, with pleasure very unusual beaming in their faces, and my mother held out a letter for my acceptance, which had that moment arrived from the post. It was from Oxford.

“ My dear Jonadab,” said my mother, “ this is from college. I believe comfort has come at last. What a sin it is to despair, as if there were not a God who careth for us, and can and will, if we trust in him, supply all our reasonable wants. My dear, let us never despair, and murmur again.”

Thus was she moralising, and preaching right vangelically, when my countenance, at the first sight of the contents, struck her dumb. My look had ten thousand times the eloquence of my

tongue. It was from one of my creditors, to whom I owed about £16, which I had omitted to pay, not because I possessed not then the means, but from sheer negligence, or forgetfulness. I knew not what to do with the letter, much less how to arrange my tongue for an explanation, as delicate, and as little offensive as possible. My tongue, however, could not wear more daggers than my face. The worst of it was, they knew not that I was one shilling in debt, and then they might think this only the beginning of many similar sorrows. If I was indebted to one man, I might be to a hundred.

I plucked up my courage, however, from desperation, and read the letter to them aloud, with the fierceness of one who cares for no man, and can say to fortune, "do thy worst." The fear of more epistles of this disagreeable character, steeped their disappointment in gall, and embittered bitterness. Their affection interdicted all reprobation; and they merely asked, as blandly as they were able, if that were all I owed? My answer was, it is. Not a syllable

more did I utter then. I defied the utmost malice of fortune. How can that man fear, who has nothing to lose? So cool and imperturbable was my mind at that moment, that I was like a wild beast, which has been hunted and wounded, and during the chase, has done all in its power, and felt great anxiety to escape; but which, being driven into the cave, whence escape is impossible, turns round, and keeps its enemies at bay, possessing a feeling, and exhibiting greater courage now, when, indeed, there is the strongest reason to fear.

I thought really that my misfortunes, treading thus upon the heels of one another, must break the hearts of my friends, even were they made of materials tougher than I knew them to be of; but I had now become accustomed to bear this rupture of their hearts. Every fresh mishap, had brought along with it this fear in particular; and my heart having been galled, and galled beyond endurance, at last turned round, and threw down the gauntlet, to the utmost vengeance of fortune.

I rose, however, after they had retired; and

during the discharge of my office at the dressing-table, when I quarrelled with the looking-glass, my mind had leisure for consideration, and in consideration deep, serious, and most anxious, it employed it. Now, every man who has been in battle knows, and is ready to admit, that nothing has such a power to craven the heart, as consideration. I have been told, but I do not vouch for the truth of it, that officers, more than one, came within sight of the field of Waterloo, and then absented themselves from the whole battle, and that military men have said, "that had they once entered into the battle, their blood would have defied the thickest shower of balls." Reflection, as well as conscience, makes cowards of us all.

After the event of this morning had been fairly shaken and sifted in my mind, I felt some confusion of face, at the idea of making my appearance, which I was just about to do, in the parlour, for breakfast. I had owed this sum of money, which to us was no trifle, and had professed to them that all my debts had been fully discharged, but when I said so, I had,

be it observed, really forgotten the above. It was for the gown and hood, and a few clothes, but the two first items were the principal ; and I had positively come away with these things, procured on the occasion of my taking the degree of B.A., as completely slipt out of my mind, as if they had never been there before ; indeed, I could not remember that I had ever been conscious, or aware that they had to be paid for. The letter had not recalled an idea of debt, but created one. For the first time, on the sight of that "request to be paid at your earliest convenience," did I know that I owed the money. So that, though I had told them a falsehood, it was not a wilful one. Nevertheless, I had no doubt that they would think it, and among themselves, call it the latter, a story, which is the less fierce, and more lady-like word.

Into the breakfast-room I bounced, with that audacity, and effected nonchalance, which a guilty person exhibits in his whole deportment and mien, when he is enacting an innocent character. Any person, in the least acquainted with human character and countenance, would see at

the first glance, that I was endeavouring to seem what I was not ; and the very apéry only confirmed their opinion, that in the matter of the debt aforesaid, I had been guilty of a wilful untruth. I was conscious that they thought so, and this only made me perform my post, as a stage-player on the great theatre of the world, so much the worse. In any common barn of histrionic celebrity, I should have been hissed. I saw that I was a poor player, and, therefore, without anything more to do, took the bull by the horns, and commenced my apologetic explanation. I assured them, in the most solemn manner, that I had never thought of the debt, though I ought to have done so ; and that if the bill had been presented prior to my departure, as it should have been, I should have discharged it, my resources being at that time sufficient for the purpose. I also assured them that I had been endeavouring to recollect, but could not, a single creditor more.

They were fully satisfied ; but there was a disappointment, which hung a heavy, and a dead weight on their minds. They thought,

poor things, on the arrival of that letter, that a reference, or rather final discharge, had come to their sorrows, and they found only the sickening of despair, and solace in resignation, to the worst. We began now to think, in good earnest, that a situation of my sort, friendless as I was, was out of my reach, and my father very seriously advised me to think no more of the church, to which it evidently appeared that I had no call, or of any other post for which a literary education is a qualification ; but to go somewhere where I was unknown, and learn a business.

He mentioned several, at which my classical stomach heaved with disgust, and one in particular which, had I acceded to the proposal, would have confined me, not at three score, but under thirty : it was that I should become spirit-merchant, for which purpose he would advance me a sufficient sum of money. Could I have unlearned what I learned at school and at Oxford, could my mind have been thoroughly washed from all classical lore, as if there had

never been the impression of a single Latin word, or Greek character upon it, I should have embraced the overture and have avoided a multitude of sins. I should have been comparatively at peace with my conscience.

But there was an *if* in all that : much virtue in an *if*, says Shakespeare. I could not unlearn Latin and Greek, nor forget that I had been at Oxford, and was B.A. Having aspired to a profession, my mind would not, could not, descend to a trade. Having learned to soar aloft, it is difficult to learn to creep on the ground. We came at last to the conclusion, that, after a few more attempts at a professional situation, I should open a private school somewhere in the south. We were afraid of the expense of such an undertaking requiring more money than we possessed ; but on a small scale, proper for the commencement, we thought it not unfeasable. We also thought that, after I had established a respectable school, should my moral and religious character be irreproachable in the neighbourhood where I resided, I might probably obtain a title

to some neighbouring curacy. This conclusion terminated our breakfast, and my father rose, he was obliged to do so, to his sedentary employment of the pen.

I too retired to one as sedentary, not less destructive to the health, though more agreeable to the imagination—smoking. It was morning, but I longed for a pipe. I smoked until I was sick, but drank only water. I most religiously abstained from intoxicating liquor, conformably to a very good resolution I had made, and having sufficiently intoxicated myself by the smoke, I betook myself to the public news-room, a very respectable one in the town.

My object was, to examine all the papers I could get hold of for advertisements. I saw that I was particularly noticed by all the members present, but nevertheless I continued the chase through every column of every paper, I hunted, I believe, three hours, when something broke cover, which I thought not unworthy my pursuit. Let me observe, *en passant*, that for people like myself, the old Times is, to use a sportsman's

phrase, the best covert. The situation was worth my acceptance, could I obtain it, and and not too valuable to bring many competitors into the field.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE advertisement was for a master to a free grammar school in the south of England, of which the endowed salary was £80 per annum. It was said to be not incompatible with a curacy, that one in the neighbourhood might at no distant period be vacant, and that, when it was vacant, the successful candidate for the school would have the preference and, if not in orders, would be ordained to it. It was, in every respect, a most eligible appointment for me, just the thing I wanted, and, could I obtain it, my opinion at the moment was, that my utmost ambition

and the first wish of my heart would be amply gratified. So suitable did imagination represent it, that I did not think I should ever wish for a more comfortable berth. "My wishes," said I, "will never soar beyond it. A school and curacy both together cannot fail to please and fix me in respectability and comfort. This stipend too is not too much, I shall not have many antagonists."

And now for testimonials. There was to be no examination; even personal appearance before the trustees was not required. The greatest number of testimonials, or the strongest, or both, would decide the fortune of the day. My college testimonials would not of course be dispensed with, and I thought that they would tell the most, I applied therefore for the usual college testimonial, which I received by the first post, and the following is a copy.

"To all to whom these Presents shall come,
Greeting :

"Whereas, Jonadab Rechab, B.A., of ——
College, in the University of Oxford, hath re-

quested of us our Letters, testimonial of his good life and conversation, We, the Fellows of —— College, do testify, that he, the said Jonadab Rechab, resided among us four years; during which time he lived piously, soberly, and honestly, that he diligently applied himself to his studies, and behaved himself as a faithful subject of the King's Majesty, and a dutiful son of the Church of England, and that he hath not, so far as we know or believe, embraced or maintained any principles or doctrines contrary to the same, and, moreover, we do, in our conscience believe him to be duly qualified for the management of a public school.

“In witness whereof we have to these presents affixed the seal we make use of on these occasions, and have subscribed our names, this — day of ——, in the year of our Lord, 18——.”

To the tail of this precious document, and admirable specimen of calligraphy, were appended the names of four Fellows, in as illegible a scrawl as ever was seen, probably, since the invention of pothooks. It is a well-known fact, that the

above letters testimonial, as they are called, were copied from a form always used, without the variation of a syllable, except on very rare occasions, by the common-room servant; none of the fellows ever attempted the transcription.

As a testimonial for the school, for which I was a candidate, and told them so in my letter, what is there in it that can be called a recommendation? All it says about qualifications is contained in these words: "we do, in our consciences believe him to be duly qualified for the management of a public school." Not a syllable more is there about my scholarship, and yet that was the principal, I may almost say the only thing the trustees wanted to know respecting me. They had the conscience to say that they thought me *duly qualified*; those are all the two words, in the compass of which their conscientious recommendation was enclosed. Was there something latently significant in these two words; more meant than what met the ear? I have heard of the Iliad being inclosed in a nutshell: did they intend to shut up something as valuable in the expression "duly qualified?"

If they did, I fear the trustees saw only the shell, and never penetrated to the kernel. If they had searched the whole of Johnson's Dictionary, with Todd's additions, and all others ever published besides, they could not have found a more suspicious-looking word than the dissyllable "duly," and it is to be hoped, for their character's sake, as gentlemen, to say nothing of them as scholars, that they will in future discard it from their vocabulary.

From this testimonial, which should have been a nucleus, round which the rest were to gather, as merely confirmatory proofs, I entertained, as might be expected, very feeble expectations of success. Such, however, whether I applied for this or any other similar post, was to be my college recommendation. I would have thrown the matter up in despair and disgust, had not my friends, as usual, urged me on to proceed. I therefore wrote to the junior tutor, who had left college, and was residing upon a college living: and a very flattering testimonial he gave me; not more so than what, he said, truth obliged him to write. I was of his opinion,

which may be imputed to vanity. To the senior I neither wrote nor could, succeed or fail, live or die, after he had deprived me of a fellowship, I could not ask him to recommend me to a school ; a school too, the endowment of which was only £80 for the master.

From Mr. De Witt, I received a most gratifying testimony, though I am sure, not more so than I deserved, to my unwearied assiduity, and astonishing progress, to use his words, whilst I was under his instruction. He wrote as if I had not failed at Oxford, or as if that failure had been merely a misfortune, such as may happen to the cleverest and the best. His opinion of me was unchanged ; he still regarded me as what he had always believed me to be : a youth of no ordinary talent. As he had been my successful rival in a matter, which more than anything else, or than all other things together, decides a man's destiny through life, for weal or woe, I felt, I confess, an indescribable sensation, when I wrote his address in my letter of application to him, but I have no occasion to regret that I requested of him a testimonial. My best thanks are also due

to the present master of the Grammar School, who had never taught me a syllable, but had heard of me much and enough from my contemporary school-fellows, and many most respectable gentlemen and families in the town. His testimonial, if looked upon as anything more than a mere testimony of friendship, must have told, with most overwhelming effect in my favour. Several of the first gentlemen in the town also attested to my conduct, character, and abilities, and such testimonials I might have multiplied almost in infinitum.

I inclosed the whole forthwith to the gentleman to whom the advertisement directed testimonials to be transmitted. A specific day for the election had not yet been fixed; but would most probably be in the course of six weeks. So long then had I to wait before I could know the result; and so long, and somewhat longer, I did wait—but, from the first, without the least hope of success. I knew, full well, that the testimonials of friends are considered as only testimonies of friendship; and all but universally so they are—nothing more, and very often not

so much. Many a man will write you a strong testimonial, who does not cordially wish you success.

Again then, and still despondency or despair was the vulture within. Milton puts much truth into the mouth of Satan :

“The mind is its own place, and in itself,
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

A man's unhappiness is generally of his own making ; the result of a foolish imagination and of the want of proper mental discipline and control. Nothing had happened to me but what was common to man, what had happened ever since man was made and will to the consummation of all things. I was miserable, for I would be so ; I was obliged to confess to myself that apparently I was determined to be so. Immediately, therefore, on returning from the post, I plumped into my small apartment, not to be initiated, for my noviciate was long since over, but to revel as an established smoker and sot, in what is as brutal to man as to eat grass like the ox, and infinitely more disgusting.

By physical disease and deprecated habit, I had now become an inebriate and smoker, but never for a moment did I solace and cheer myself with the expectation of being appointed to the mastership; indeed, my application seldom recurred to my recollection. I had almost forgotten it, and when I did think of it, I instantly cast the thought away as of some idle experiment, never likely to succeed.

At or towards the expiration of that period, I one day read in a periodical I accidentally picked up, of some distinguished author having, during his moments of embarrassment, made much money by writing for magazines or reviews. It instantly occurred to me that I might do the same, and to the pipe I betook myself, in order more decisively to think about it and concoct and mature my plan. Having fully decided on the way to proceed, I addressed three or four letters to so many editors, who drink their wine out of the skulls of authors. I knew that I must live, and I thought that I might thus. Having put them into the post, prepaid, I returned to my pipe to indulge in the

reveries of hope, and glorious reveries they were: I had in my eye and within my clutch several hundreds a year. They gave so much for every sixteen pages of letter-press, and I could write so many pages daily. Had my calculations been correct, certainly I might have provided not for myself only, but amply also for those who heretofore had provided for me, besides realizing a large literary reputation. Having thus, by the aid of Virginia and gin, worked myself up into paradise, and far higher, indeed, than any created intelligence ever mounted before, or maybe ever will, I was accosted by my mother in breathless haste; a person desired to speak to me. I was half angry with the best of mothers for maiming the wing of my airy imagination, but descended to the drawing-room.

One of the most respectable gentlemen in the town, a solicitor, waited for me. He was one who had favoured me with a testimonial, but the school and my mind were as far asunder, as the east is from the west.

“ Well, Mr. Rechab, I have just received a

letter from one of the trustees, who is of my own profession, and an old acquaintance, though I was not aware of it when I wrote you a testimonial. He has inclosed a copy of all the testimonials which you have sent, and requests me, on my honour as a gentleman, to say if, so far as I know, they speak the truth, and to give him any further information respecting you, which I may possess. The trustees, he says, are pleased with your testimonials, and therefore, think proper to make this inquiry of me."

"Then it rests with you whether I get the appointment or not?"

"I will do my best for you."

"I hope you will: pray do: I believe you will."

"I rejoice at the opportunity."

"Not for my sake, that is nothing; but for my father's."

"For yours as well. Any letters which I may write, I will send to you, and you shall seal them up and post them for me. I leave you this seal for the purpose."

“ Oh, there is no occasion for that ; I doubt not your sincerity ; I only want to awaken your zeal.”

“ I have no doubt that you are sure of the appointment ; and if anything I can do, can get it you, it shall be done.”

He was a man of business, and left without further parley, glad as I was myself.

Oh ! what happiness can hope deferred, when it cometh, diffuse through a house ! It is the rising sun in the midst of tangible darkness and horror indescribable. What tongue can describe, or heart conceive, the joy he left behind him ? We were now more closely, if possible, united than ever. Our joy was that, not of four hearts, but of one whole and indivisible ; our union, not mere mechanical diffusion, but chemical combination.

“ Jonadab,” said my mother, “ your father is very poorly.”

“ I know, and am very sorry for it.”

“ He is bowed down with years too, and his grey hairs are brought down almost to the grave

with sickness and sorrow ; if in good health he is now too old to work."

" My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that I may relieve him from further labour, I should say, slavery."

" You have it now in your power : there is a house for the master to live in."

" The instant I receive the appointment, we will remove in it ; there is no fear of the mastership being taken from me, for the stipend is from an endowment, and therefore a life annuity, at least so long as I conduct myself properly."

O ! the satisfaction, the contentment, the bliss this arrangement spread in the hearts of us all ! I had the pleasure before me, a pleasure I had always coveted, of providing for my father, when he could no longer provide for me. It was a righteous, a holy pleasure, the fulfilment in the spirit as well as to the letter of the first commandment with promise ; surely it deserved to be gratified.

Our time was now spent in not only planning, but partly executing, preparations for our removal to a distant part of the country, some

things which we did not possess, were purchased, and the purchase of others was postponed until our arrival at the place. In the course of a week or two all things were arranged, even the mode of transit as well for the furniture as for ourselves.

I did not renounce drinking, but, being more composed, drank less : as for smoking, I had for some time despaired of ever being able either to discontinue it or to smoke less. To relieve myself, occasionally, from it, I as usual sauntered into the fields, or perambulated the town ; but, now that I was fortunate, I preferred the latter. I was neither ashamed nor afraid to meet any thing in the shape of man.

One rainy and greasy morning as I was walking in the street with attitude erect and dauntless forehead, I encountered an old school-fellow, who, I knew, never had me in any part of his heart, except that which is the especial abode of malevolence. He was one too of the very few, who knew of my attachment and disappointment.

“I congratulate you, Rechab, on your

appointment to the mastership of the Royal Free Grammar-school of T—."

"I am not appointed yet, Dampier, and you know it."

"But you are sure of it, and that is much the same thing."

"It remains to see whether I shall get it."

"After that, I suppose you will fall in love; I hope you will not be disappointed."

"That is what you can never be, for you are incapable of the passion."

"Oh! I can love as well as any man: how is your father?"

"You know that he is very unwell: I cannot say that he is better to day."

"Really, Rechab, if you marry soon after you go to T—, you may say, I think, with Hamlet.

" 'The funeral-baked meats,
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage table.' "

"Is your wish father to that thought?"

"Oh, no, I hope you are sure of your £80 per annum."

Having thus discharged a little of his superfluous gall, he left me with a contemptuous sneer, which instead of depressing my mind, did the reverse, I was so supremely happy in the awakened power of giving joy.

But his jeers could only shew their teeth, they could not bite. The mortification which I saw he felt at the smiling prospect before me, rendered me, if possible, still more happy, and, having now taken a longer walk than usual, I returned home in high spirits.

On entering the house, I found my father and mother and brother very pale, and the two latter in tears. I was "listening, fear and dumb amazement, all." What could be the matter now? my eye which fell upon the table answered the question. There lay my testimonials, returned, with a note to say, that another candidate had been appointed, whose college testimonials were much more satisfactory.

I afterwards requested the gentleman, who had so interested himself for me to write to his friend and ask, if the successful candidate had taken a high university honour.

The reply, come in two or three days, that he had taken none.

He had the good fortune not to have been an independent member of the same college.

“ May this be washed in Lethe and forgotten ?”

CHAPTER XIX.

I RAMBLED up and down the town with my hands on my back from morning till night, having no object or place of destination : people passed me but I saw them not ; some spoke to me, I heard them not or did not understand them. Thus did I ramble day after day round the town and round again, perfectly unconscious why or wherefore, where I was or whither tending. It was on one of these days that I went with many others into a large room, of which the door in the street was wide open ; it was the news-room. I had been there before, but

now did not know it. If it was full of gentlemen ; I never saw them ; if they noticed me, it is known only to themselves. I took up a York paper and ran my eye down one column and up another, column after column, but I could hardly be said to see them ; certainly not a word did I read. What first awoke me in some degree from my stupor was the word curacy ; a little lower down the same column there was another. Pen, ink and paper were before me, and, without forming a wish or resolution, but mechanically and as if in a dream, I copied one of them, to which I subscribed the initials of my name, directing application to be addressed to the editor. This I took to the post, paid a sovereign for a post-office order to that amount, and inclosed it in a letter, which I pre-paid and posted.

One beautiful, brilliant Sunday morning, we were thus assembled at the breakfast-table, all silent, but I not sorrowful. We were breakfasting in silence, I too for anything I knew, and we had half done, when the postman brought a letter prepaid and addressed to me.

They were as startled as if some one had opened the door and fired a pistol into the room ; I was not cognisant of anything having occurred. My father opened and read it and then found a tongue.

“ My dear Jonadab, a curacy is offered to you.”

Again the word roused me from my torpor : I awoke as out of a trance, and took the letter and read it for myself. It was a reply to the advertisement, forwarded to me by the editor of the York paper.

“ There must be some mistake ; I have not advertised ; it cannot be for me.”

“ It is certainly addressed to Jonadab Rechab, and I know no one of that name but yourself.”

“ I advertised a long time since : a year since—no one would reply after so long a time.”

“ Be that as it may, it is meant for you, and you must answer it.”

I read the letter over and over again, and

each time became more distinctly my own identical self, and no sooner was I wholly myself again than I felt a desire, and that was for a pipe.

“Well,” said I, “whoever has advertised, this is certainly for me.”

“It is, it is, it can be for nobody else,” said my mother and brother in the same breath. “Jonadab, it is far better than a school; away with schools, I think nothing of them. You will now be what we always wanted you to be, and you are fit for nothing else.”

“His name is Courtley, but he says nothing about stipend.”

“I warrant you there will be a stipend; every man is not a Mr. Scrapling.”

Thus were they running on in high glee, while I ascended to my small room to, consult my pipe on the subject. I had no recollection of having recently advertised, and concluded either that it was a reply to my former advertisement a twelvemonth since, or that some one from compassion and to save us expense had

advertised for me. Mr. Courtley, who called himself the Rector of Benwell in N——, of which he offered me the curacy, appointed the Black Swan, Coney Street, in York as the place where he would wish to have an interview with me the day after to-morrow.

CHAPTER XX.

AGAIN am I mounted on a stage-coach, the first time since I left Oxford, inhaling the breeze that rudely saluted my face, but not as then revelling in a fool's paradise. I built no unreal castles, my mind was down at zero. What a creature is man ! We call this a fickle climate, but its changeableness is nothing to that of the human mind. I was about to see Eboracum, which I had never seen before, an innocent, Roman station, but about that I cared nothing. A Roman emperor had been born there ; it no more occurred to me, than that a man had

been born there. All my thoughts were occupied about other things. Formerly York had been called, and with reason, *Altera Roma*, a second Rome. "York," says the author of the *Poli-chronicon*, "before it was burnt by William the Conqueror, seemed, from the beauty and magnificence of its buildings, as fair as the city of Rome." Once the seat of empire for the sovereigns of the world, it had seen its grandeur diminish by the mouldering hand of time, or fall before the convulsive effects of political storms. In the reign of Stephen, 1137, another fire in the city of York, occasioned by accident, spread so extensively, as to burn down the Cathedral, St. Mary's Abbey, St. Leonard's Hospital, thirty-nine parish churches in the city, and Trinity Church, in the suburbs. These, and other historical facts were known to me, and might have engaged my serious meditations ; but they lay still, and uninvoked in the dark recesses of my memory, while far different ideas and passions found employment for my head and heart. I neither considered nor cared what York had been, or was.

At a large town, about a dozen miles from York, the coach waited for a half an hour. When I used to travel to and from Oxford, my wont was, on such an occasion as this, to traverse the streets, and see what was to be seen of the town. But now, I lament to record my wont was woefully changed. I wanted a pipe, and no doubt my anticipations of evil, and dissatisfaction with my fancied prospects, fancied I say, for in reality, I knew nothing about them, helped, as well as the habit, to create this want. I felt no desire for a glass, but of course, I could not go into an inn to smoke, without at the same time, spending something upon drink. I therefore entered the paltry fetid beer-shop, where the coach had stopped.

It was then about eleven o'clock, and the smell of tobacco and ale, smoked and drunk the night before, I thought infinitely more offensive than that of a charnel-house. I was shown into a small parlour, in the back part of the house, filled all round with chairs, contiguous to one another, as if it were accustomed

to accommodate a large company, though it was only a small apartment; the floor was thickly sanded, and each chair had its appropriate spittoon. Who says that smoking and drinking do not go together? Almost every ale-house attests the fact.

There was only one person in the room, whom I had never seen before; if I had, I should have instantly gone out, for I had not yet lost all sense of shame. He had the commanding aspect and bearing of a gentleman, and no doubt was one in ruins, that is, who had acquired the most fatal habits. His face was covered with large red blotches, and what should have been the white part of his eye bore the hue of port wine. Verily he had done some service to Bacchus, or he would not have had a face so rubicund and marred from what it had once been, for it had evidently been not long since very handsome. He had a thick, shock head of hair, black, but sprinkled with grey, the effect of the intemperate life he had led, not of age, for he must have been considerably under thirty. I was ashamed to look at him,

and by his averted eye there was clearly no shame lost between us. He was smoking, and had a glass of ale on a small table before him. A large shaggy dog lay crouching at his feet, which, on my entering the room, eyed me obliquely through the long hair spread over his eyes like a veil, and slightly wagged the tip of his tail. I felt an unaccountable interest in both, and thought I should know them again at any distance of time. We smoked and drank together in unbroken silence from first to last, he looking out of the window, and I I know not where, until the coachman came to tell me that the coach was starting again.

We reached York about two, and after looking about for some time for a private but respectable inn, where I could indulge unseen, I came to one such as I wanted, and walked several times backwards and forwards before the window to see if any one were within. Seeing no one I entered hastily: and what was the first object which met my eyes but the unknown gentleman in a corner of the room with his dog at his

feet as before. The surprise was mutual. I stood for a moment with prominent eyes and open mouth, and he fairly burst out into a laugh. He saw that he had found a brother slave, and thought that we might as well hug our chains together. The dog eyed me as before, through the shaggy veil over his eyes, only with this difference, that instead of wagging the tip end of his tail, he wagged the whole of it.

“Heaven help you !” said he, “you want a pipe.”

“I do, Sir. What a terrible thing it is to be a slave to such a vile habit ! But for that I should not have come hither.”

“’Sdeath and the devil, Sir ! if that be all, you may rise in your profession. Many a bishop to my certain knowledge loves a pipe as well as I do.”

Had I not been a clergyman intended, I should not have been ashamed of a pipe ; I did not therefore like his taking me for a parson ; but I suppose my costume, or rather its colour, betrayed me.

"But no bishop would like, I think, to promote a smoking curate."

"Od's my little life, Sir, how do you know that? If it be bad to smoke, we all like to be in the same mess. No man likes his neighbour to be better than himself."

"But I think, Sir, it is not thought very becoming in either priest or deacon, much more bishop."

"S'life, Sir, it is becoming in any man and in every man. I would give a living to a smoker, but I would sooner give my dog, Pollux, which the whole world could not purchase, than a living to a milksop, who refuses the comforts that God offers him."

"But is not smoking considered an evidence of something worse?"

"Marry, come up, I suppose you mean a glass."

"I do; is not a smoker generally thought to be a drinker as well?"

"Hoot awa, Sir, what is a drinker, but a man who enjoys what God gives him and returns Him thanks? Sir, a teetotaller is the most

ungrateful fellow upon earth. How can a man be thankful or give thanks, for there is some difference if he will not accept God's gifts. If a teetotaller goes to heaven, may my sins lack mercy, Sir, they give thanks in heaven."

"Certainly they do, and men ought to do it on earth, or they are unfit for heaven; but I cannot think that a curate, for instance, who bears the character of being fond of a pipe and a glass, will stand a good chance or any, indeed, to rise in the church."

"Troth, Sir, I do not mean to say that a notorious drunkard, visiting in pot-houses with tinkers and climbing boys, has much chance or any, God forbid he should; but there is nothing wrong or rather much to be commended, in a person or any other man smoking a pipe and drinking a glass of good double brown stout; that is what I mean to say."

"If I understood you, you would not advise me to discontinue smoking and a moderate glass."

"By my faith as a gentleman and, let me add, a friend, that is what I mean. You are

unmarried and will live in lodgings; how ennuyé you must be without a pipe, and a glass in addition, and in reason, cannot hurt you."

"Upon my word, Sir, you seem to know me as well as if we had been acquainted for years. I do not remember ever seeing you before to-day, when I was travelling."

"Oh! heavens name, who is there that knows not the life a young curate has to lead in this country? Do as I tell you, and you will please your flock, and how know you what your flock may do for you?"

"Never make me a bishop, I am sure."

"Hum; is your aspiration so high? no, but they'll make you a Rector."

"Ha, ha, ha! what, a few farmers and farm-labourers?"

"Good again! yes, a few farmers and farm-labourers."

"Then we live and learn indeed; I never heard of an instance."

"Beshrew my hand, Sir, but I have; more than one."

"Where in the wide world?"

“ Lord, Sir, in a part of the wide world which men call Norfolk. Good day, Sir !”

If my eyes were ever likely to start from their sockets, they were now. My mouth was open, but I could hardly be said to breathe, and my hands rose involuntarily in an attitude of fear. Surely, thought I, this must be Mr. Courtley or some one who, in his correspondence with me, had called himself by that name. He was not dressed like a clergyman, nor, from his general appearance, could he be taken for one, but he might have been playing a heartless hoax upon me ; yet, what on earth could induce a perfect stranger to do such a thing ? He held his hand out for me to shake, and I shook it, or at least, I think so, but I was so bewildered that I hardly knew what I did.

“ Before we part, allow me to ask, Sir, what is your name ?”

“ By the white hand of Rosalind, Sir, my name is Philpots. Remember my advice, use and do not abuse, and your flock *shall* promote you.”

Without another word on either side, he and

Pollux left the room. In the course of two or three minutes I also left the house, sauntered in the streets for half an hour, bought some lozenges to clear my breath from the smell of tobacco, and though an hour too soon wended my way to the "Black Swan." I no sooner entered the traveller's room, than the waiter came to tell me that a gentleman in another room wished to speak to me. I expected that this gentleman and Mr. Philpots would prove to be *alter et idem*, one and the same person, and had great pleasure in being mistaken.

Mr. Courtley was a diminutive gentleman, apparently about seventy years of age, very erect, gentlemanly, and peculiarly plausible in his manner. He had a smooth forehead notwithstanding his age, what is called an open countenance, and that cast of happiness which must arise from his peace of mind not having been much, if at all, disturbed by the rubs of fortune. I should say, without hesitation, that he had experienced few disappointments. His hair was not in the least diminished in quantity,

but was almost perfectly white, and he had a perfect and handsome set of white teeth, so that he had been no smoker. He was evidently prepossessed in my favour from the first; a smile played upon his countenance, and he made, and strove to make himself very agreeable; I was consequently quite delighted with his company. Though he had a cheerful countenance, it bore the appearance of much religious resignation and contentment. I should say that he was a religiously disposed man, but neither enthusiast, nor cursed with superstition. .

“I am glad to see you, Mr. Rechab; have you fully made up your mind to accept the curacy of Benwell?”

“If your mind is fully made up, Sir, so is mine.”

“What? before you know anything about the curacy?”

“I presume it is much the same as any other?”

“As many, but not as any.”

“Well, what is there peculiar about it?”

“It is very retired, six miles from a large town: will you like such a state of monachism for a time?”

“Many curacies are similar, but they have their advantages. I shall have little interruption to my studies, I think I shall like it, how long I know not.”

“The population is three hundred.”

“That again, is in favour of a studious life.”

“And wholly agricultural.”

“A curate may be very comfortable among farmers, at least, such as I have seen.”

“I would advise you to endeavour to please them; be familiar with them; make them and yourself as one family.”

“Certainly, I shall be glad to be sociable; I shall think it my duty as a man; but is it, in your opinion, my duty as a clergyman?”

“They may be of great service to you.”

“In what way?”

“I am now seventy-two years of age.”

“What has that to do with it?”

“Moreover, I have powerful patrons, and

may probably soon obtain more valuable preferment."

"But how do you connect all this with the parishioners being of service to me?"

"Their recommendation is sure to procure Benwell for you."

"How do you know that?"

"I obtained it thus, and I know from the patron that it will be so again."

"Who is the patron?"

"Lord Rolle, who is the sole proprietor of that, and several adjoining parishes."

"Oh! I see; it is a small benefice, not worth the acceptance of any of his lordship's friends."

"That is good fishing; it is worth £400 per annum, arising almost entirely from glebe: there is also a good rectory."

"Where does Lord Rolle reside?"

"I do not know; he is very eccentric, but a man of excellent disposition, a really benevolent character. You see, then, the connection; the parishioners are not the patrons in law, but they are virtually, and if I should die or be

promoted, you may obtain the rectory of Benwell through their recommendation."

This was to me in the highest degree flattering. No curacy could be more inviting than one so likely to lead to the incumbency, and such an incumbency. It was the very thing I wanted, but somehow I began to suspect that all this brilliant recommendation of the curacy was meant as a set off against the smallness or want of stipend. I now wished to know what it was, but was afraid to ascertain by direct inquiry; yet it was something which he would be obliged to mention; without one, no bishop would ordain or license a curate.

"Where, Sir, shall I have to live?"

"In the rectory, with the glebe tenant."

"In the rectory! where do you live then?"

"At another living in Yorkshire."

"Then my curacy will be a sole charge?"

"With a stipend of £100 per annum. And now, Mr. Rechab, I regret that on this occasion I cannot spend more time with you. I will forward your nomination to the bishop by the

first post, and you must lose no time in transmitting to him the requisite testimonials. I suppose you know what they are?"

"I do, and will send them without delay."

"You will be in time for the next ordination. I shall always be glad to hear from you, and to see you when you come this way. But before I leave you, allow an old man whom God has eminently blessed, and he will bless you in the same way, if you walk in my steps, to give you a bit of advice."

"Oh, Sir, I shall be glad to hear it."

"You have one of the best prospects before you that a curate can desire, but remember that your success depends upon yourself. If you fail for want of proper conduct, a consistent walk, your present prospect will be a source of the bitterest remorse during your whole life; and blessed had it been for you, if you had never had it. Take care of yourself, as you value your own happiness for life, and that of your family."

"I am fully sensible of the importance of

your advice, which I highly appreciate. It is, and long has been my determination, to be exceedingly circumspect."

"Above all, beware of a fondness for liquor, that certain, and too general ruin of the young and ardent. And now, good bye. I hope you will have a pleasant journey, and above all, God's blessing."

I thought this the most eventful day of my life, hitherto, and the happiest; but many a bright morning terminates in a long, dark, and dismal night.

END OF VOL. I.

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